The Water Dragon's Bride
Story & Art by
Rei Toma
1

The Water Dragon's Bride
Story & Art by
Rei Toma

The Water Dragon's Bride

CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 5

CHAPTER 2 67

CHAPTER 3 107

CHAPTER 4 148

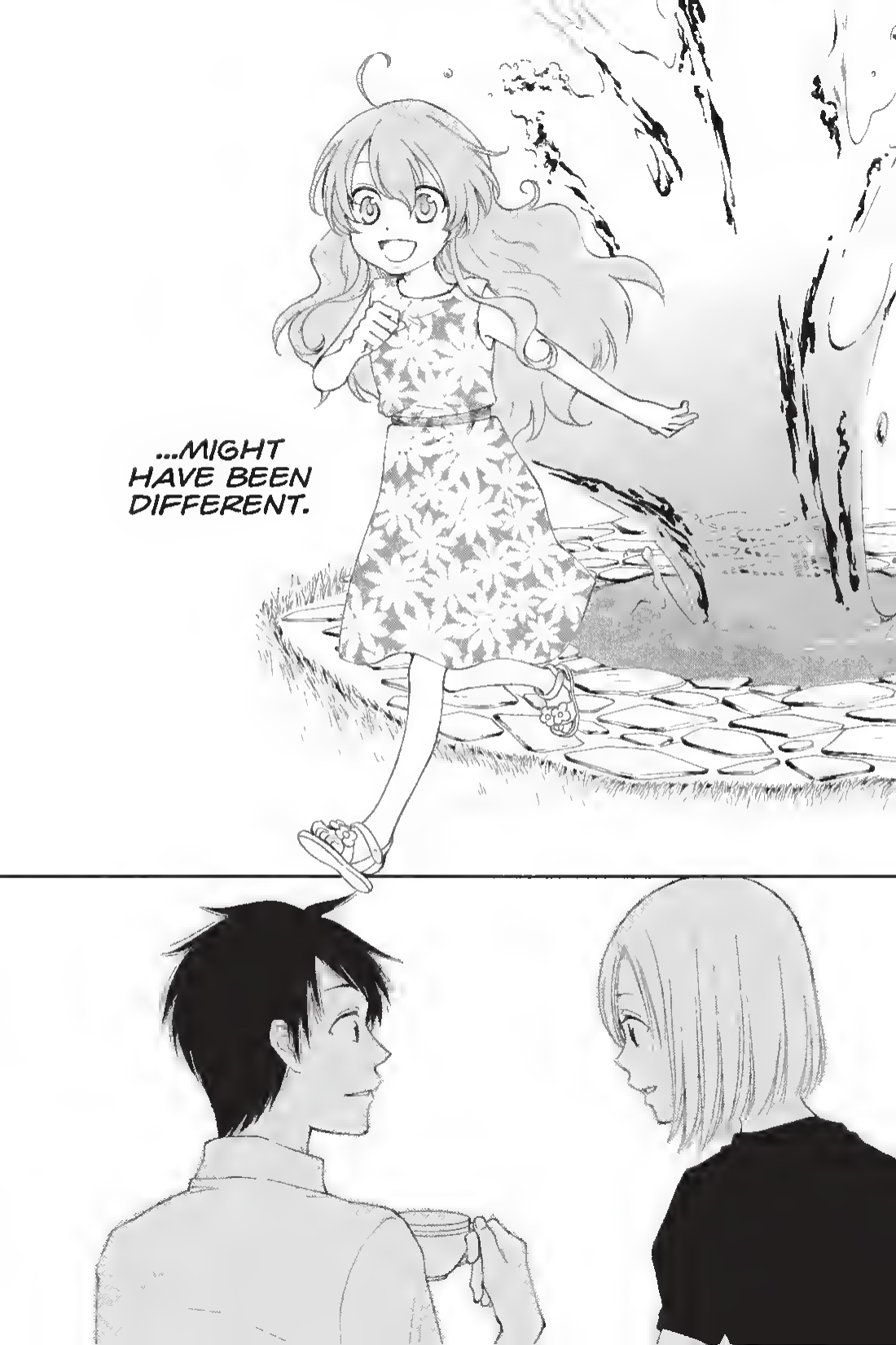
...I DIDN'T UNDER-STAND.
FOR A LONG TIME...
I COULDN'T COMPREHEND...
...THAT THIS WASN'T MY WORLD.

CHAPTER
1

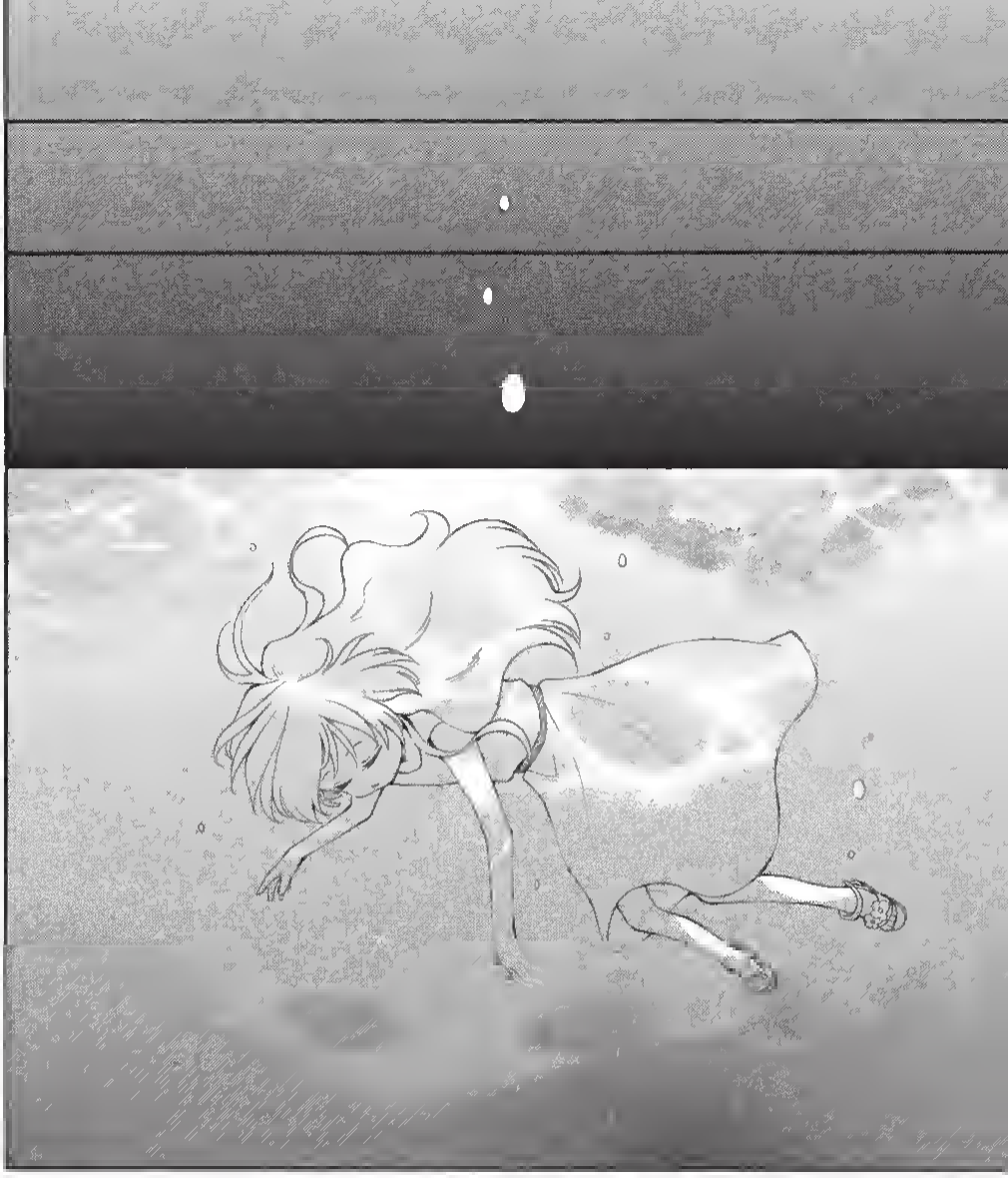
LIKE A LITTLE DOLL!
SHE REALLY IS ADORABLE!

...KNOW, RIGHT?!
I...
COOKIES, COOKIES, COOKIES!
FWP
FWP
FWP
LOOK, I MADE COOKIES!
YOU'RE SUCH A SILLY MOMMY!
I SURE AM.
SHE RESEMBLES HER GRANDMA WITH ALL HER CURLY RED HAIR AND LOVELY GREY EYES.
ISN'T SHE JUST THE CUTEST?
WHAT IS IT, DAD?
IF, AT THAT TIME...
HEY! COME LOOK AT THIS!

...I HADN'T ANSWERED MY FATHER AND GONE OUT THERE...
I ADDED A LITTLE DECORATION TO OUR POND. LIKE IT?
WHAT? DAD, THAT'S LAME!
I-IT IS? REALLY?
Daddy messed up, huh?
HONEY, IT'S TIME FOR A SNACK. COME IN AND WASH YOUR HANDS!
RIGHT.
COME ON, ASAHI! HURRY OR ALL THE COOKIES WILL BE GONE...
Cookies!
OKAY!
... THE DESTINY THAT AWAITED ME...


...MIGHT HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT.

FWSH

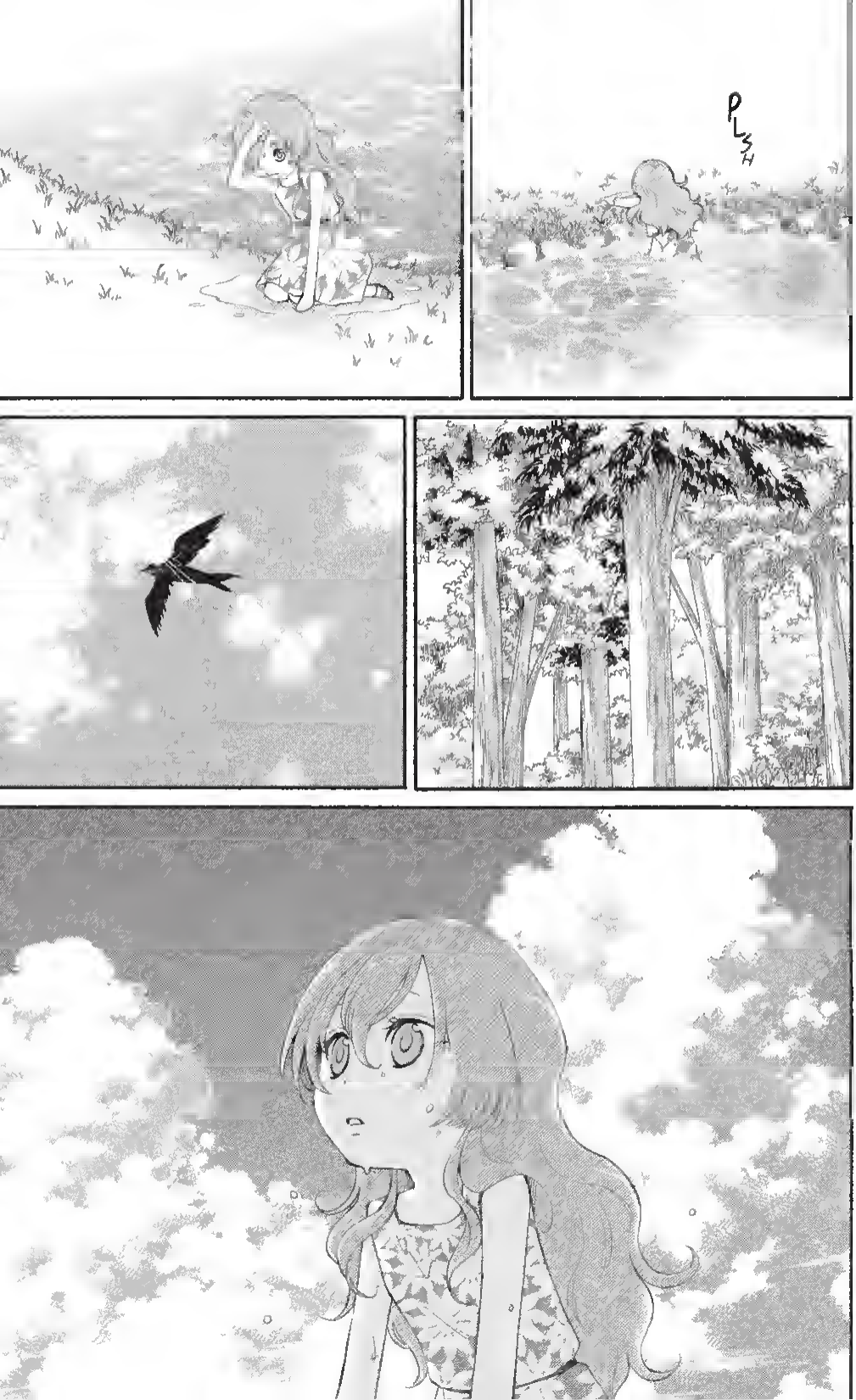


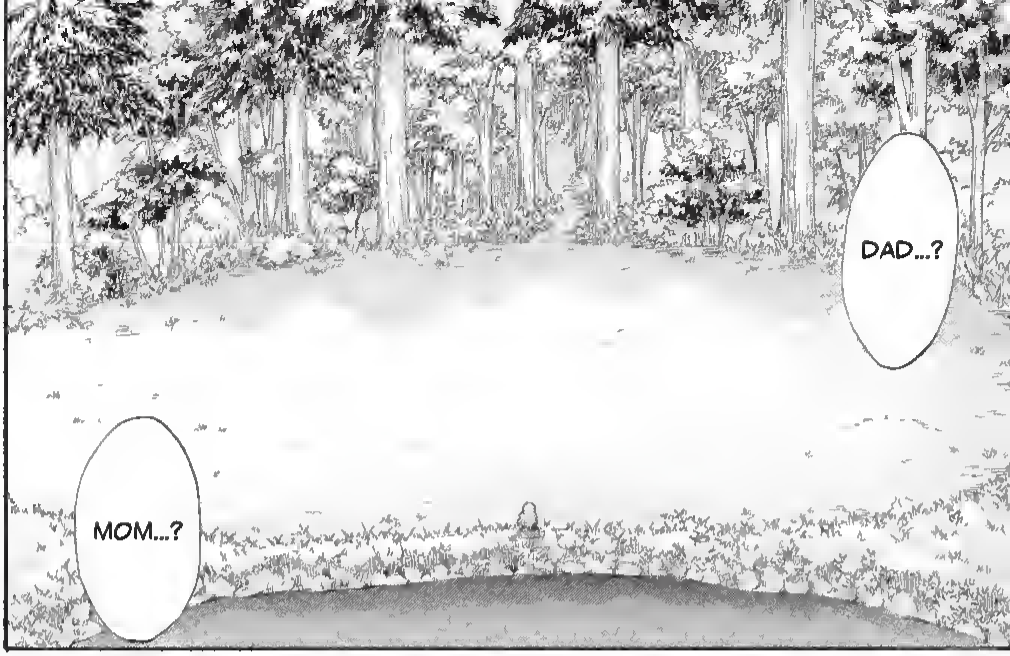
BLUB

...

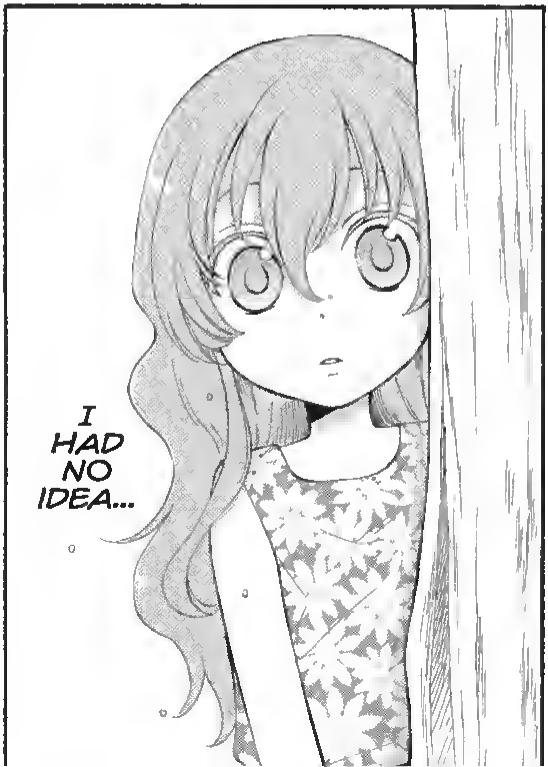
BLUB
GLUB
SPLOOSH
HAAAH!
M-
DAD...
PANT
PANT
PANT
KOFF
KOFF

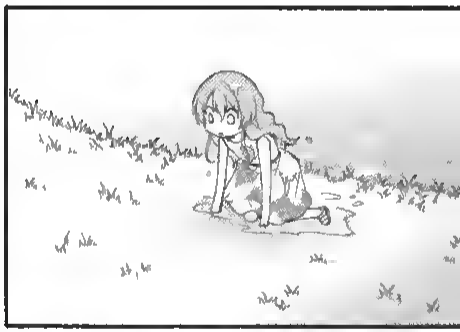
...SO SUDDEN ...
IT WAS ALL...

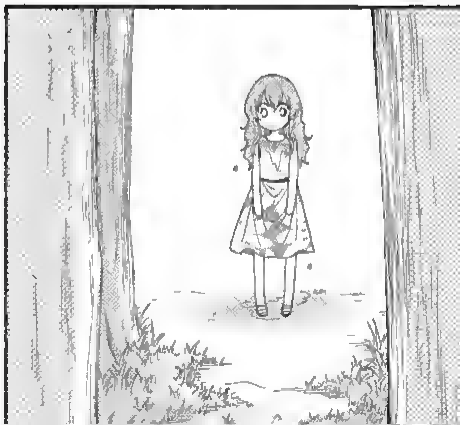

PLSH


DAD...?
MOM...?

THE COOK-IES...


I HAD NO IDEA...





DAD...
MOM...
I DIDN'T KNOW HOW DARK THE NIGHT COULD GET...
DAD...
MOM ...
...! CHK
... WITHOUT ANY LIGHTS.

FWUMP
OW...
VSH
SHUMP
NGH...
WAAAHH!
AAAAHH!

SHFF
TWITCH
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!

YOU...
ARE...

DA...?
W-WHAT?
I DIDN'T EVEN GET TO EAT ANY COOKIES!
MY MOM AND DAD ARE GONE!
BROTHER!
WAAAAAH!
DADDY! MOMMY!
AHH!
SHIINA...

W-WHAT... IS SHE?
SHE SEEMS LOST. WE SHOULD HELP HER FIND HER WAY HOME.
OH, SHE'S INJURED! WE SHOULD TAKE HER TO OUR HOME FIRST, THEN—
NO!
I REFUSE!
HER...
HER CLOTHES ARE STRANGE! HER HAIR IS A COLOR I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE...
AND LOOK! THOSE EYES ...!
SHE MUST BE AN EVIL CREATURE! I'M SCARED!

DON'T...
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, BROTHER?! WE MUST GO HOME!
I DON'T FIND HER SCARY.
DON'T SAY THAT...
GRAB
DON'T LEAVE ME ALL ALONE...
DON'T GO...

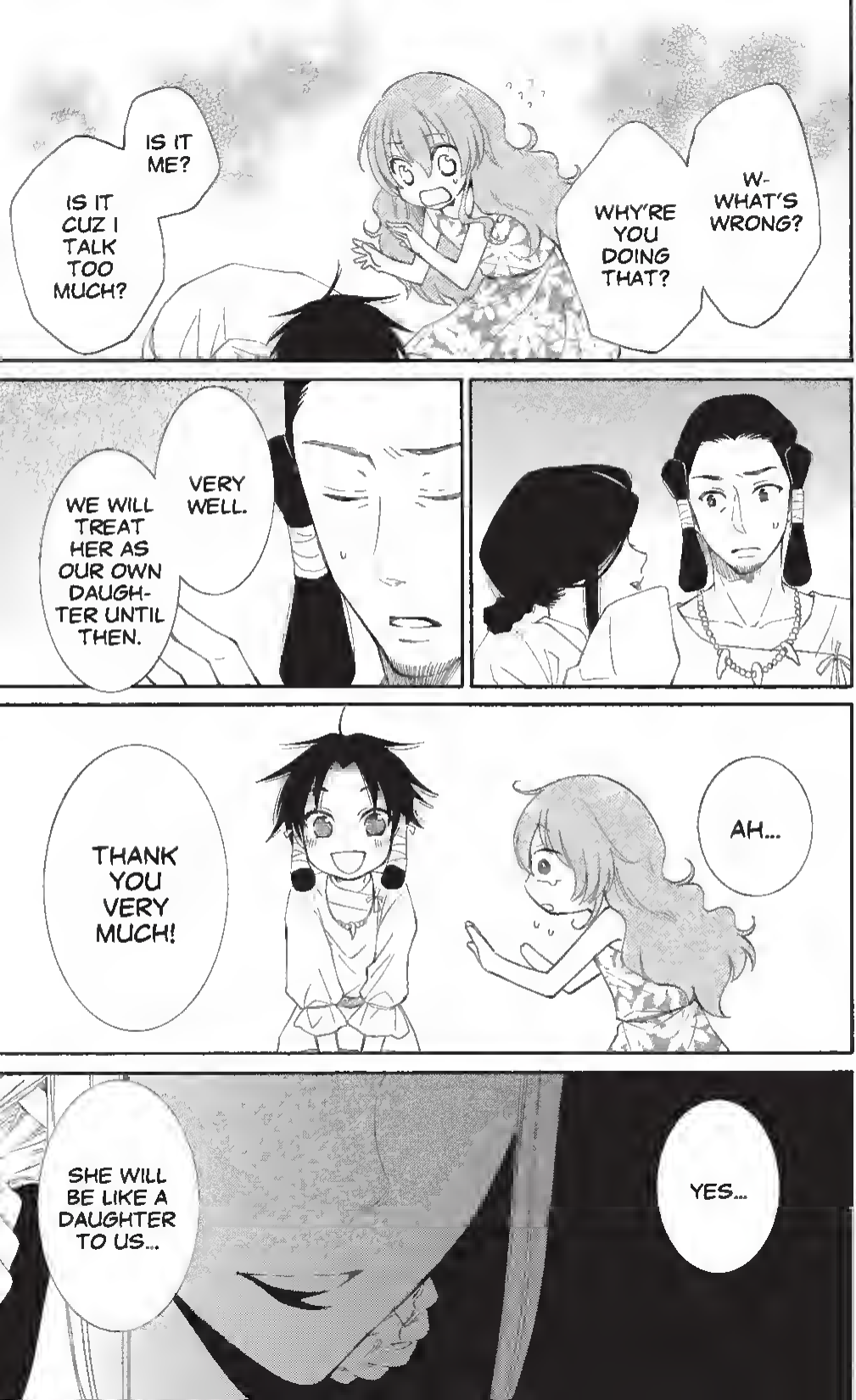
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
AH! BROTH-ER...
I'M HUNGRY...
GROWWW
COME WITH US.

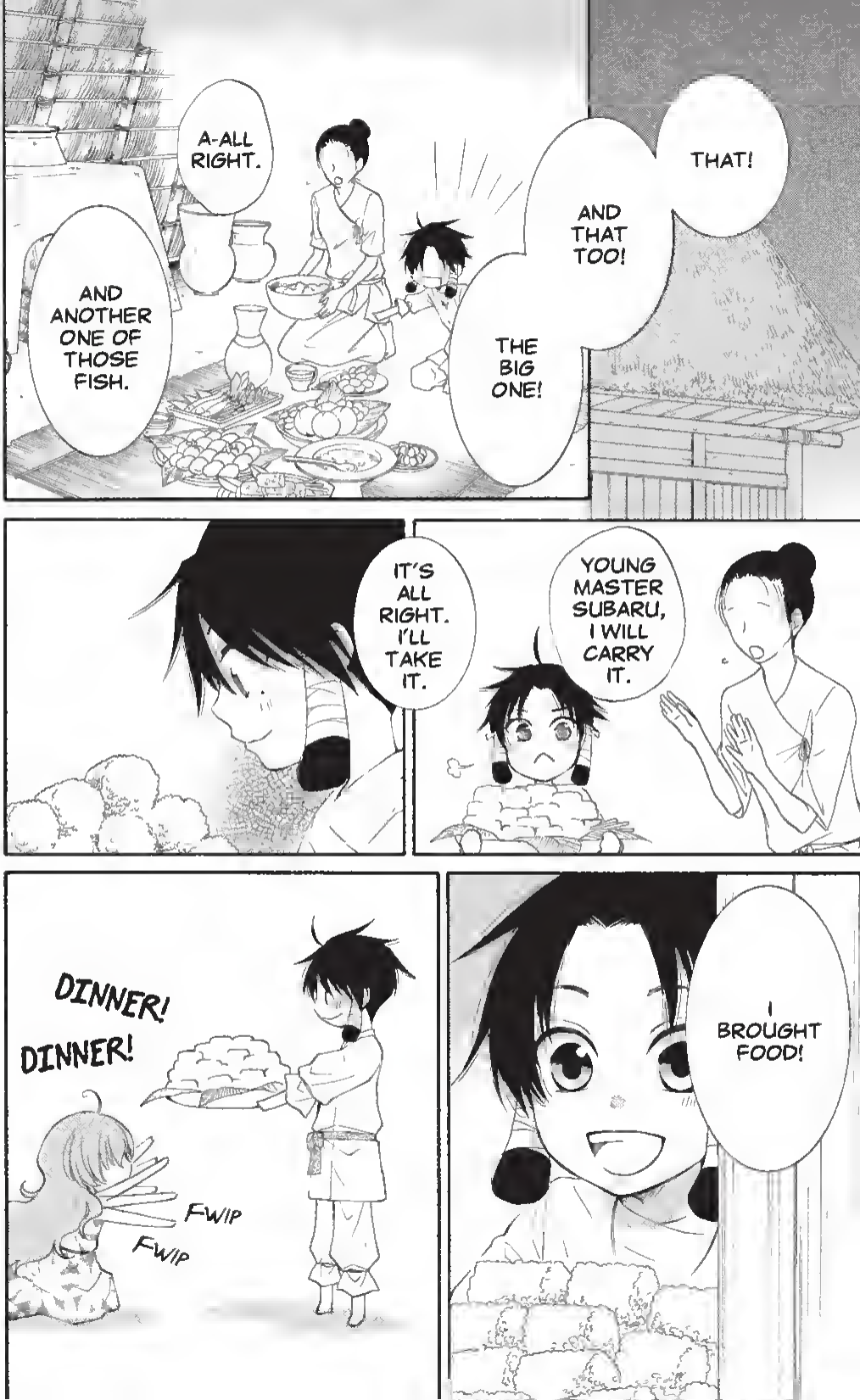
THIS IS IT.
THE BIGGEST HOUSE OVER THERE IS MY HOME.

AH HA HA HA HA
THIS PLACE IS THE STICKS!!
Right?
This place is weird.
Looks run-down...
WHAT IS SHE?
THAT GIRL...
TH...

I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE LIKE HER...
SHE FRIGHT-ENS ME...
IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'S LOST!
PLEASE, LET'S HELP HER FIND HER HOME.
CAN WE TAKE CARE OF HER UNTIL THAT HAPPENS?
HELLO, SIR AND MA'AM!
WHERE IS THIS PLACE?
IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE SUPER FAR FROM THE CITY!
WHERE'S THE TRAIN STATION? IF I CAN GET TO THE TRAIN, I CAN GO HOME ON MY OWN.
HOW ABOUT THE BUS?
OH, CAN I BORROW YOUR PHONE FIRST?

I CAN CALL DAD'S CELL PHO—
MPH
WHAT IS SHE SAYING ...?
HOW UNSET-TLING!
THWUMP
FATHER! MOTHER!
I BEG OF YOU! JUST UNTIL WE FIND HER HOME, PLEASE!


IS IT ME?
IS IT CUZ I TALK TOO MUCH?
W-WHAT'S WRONG?
WHY'RE YOU DOING THAT?
VERY WELL.
WE WILL TREAT HER AS OUR OWN DAUGHTER UNTIL THEN.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH!
AH...
SHE WILL BE LIKE A DAUGHTER TO US...
YES...


A-ALL RIGHT.
AND ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE FISH.
THE BIG ONE!
AND THAT TOO!
THAT!
IT'S ALL RIGHT. I'LL TAKE IT.
YOUNG MASTER SUBARU, I WILL CARRY IT.
DINNER!
DINNER!
FWIP
FWIP
I BROUGHT FOOD!

PLOOP
IT TASTES BAD...
...
MNCH
I-I'M SORRY!
OH NO...

BLEHHH
GULP
CHOMP CHOMP
HOMF
WHO'S "MOM"?
MOM ALWAYS TOLD ME I SHOULD CLEAN MY PLATE.
NO, I'M FINE.
WHAT SHOULD I DO? SHOULD I BRING YOU SOME-THING ELSE?!
SHE'S GOOD AT BAKING TOO! HER COOKIES ARE SO CRISPY...
MOM'S SO GOOD AT COOKING! HER MACARONI AU GRATIN IS SO TASTY! SO HOT AND CHEESY AND MELTY, AND THE MACARONI... OH!
MOM? MY MOTHER!
? ?

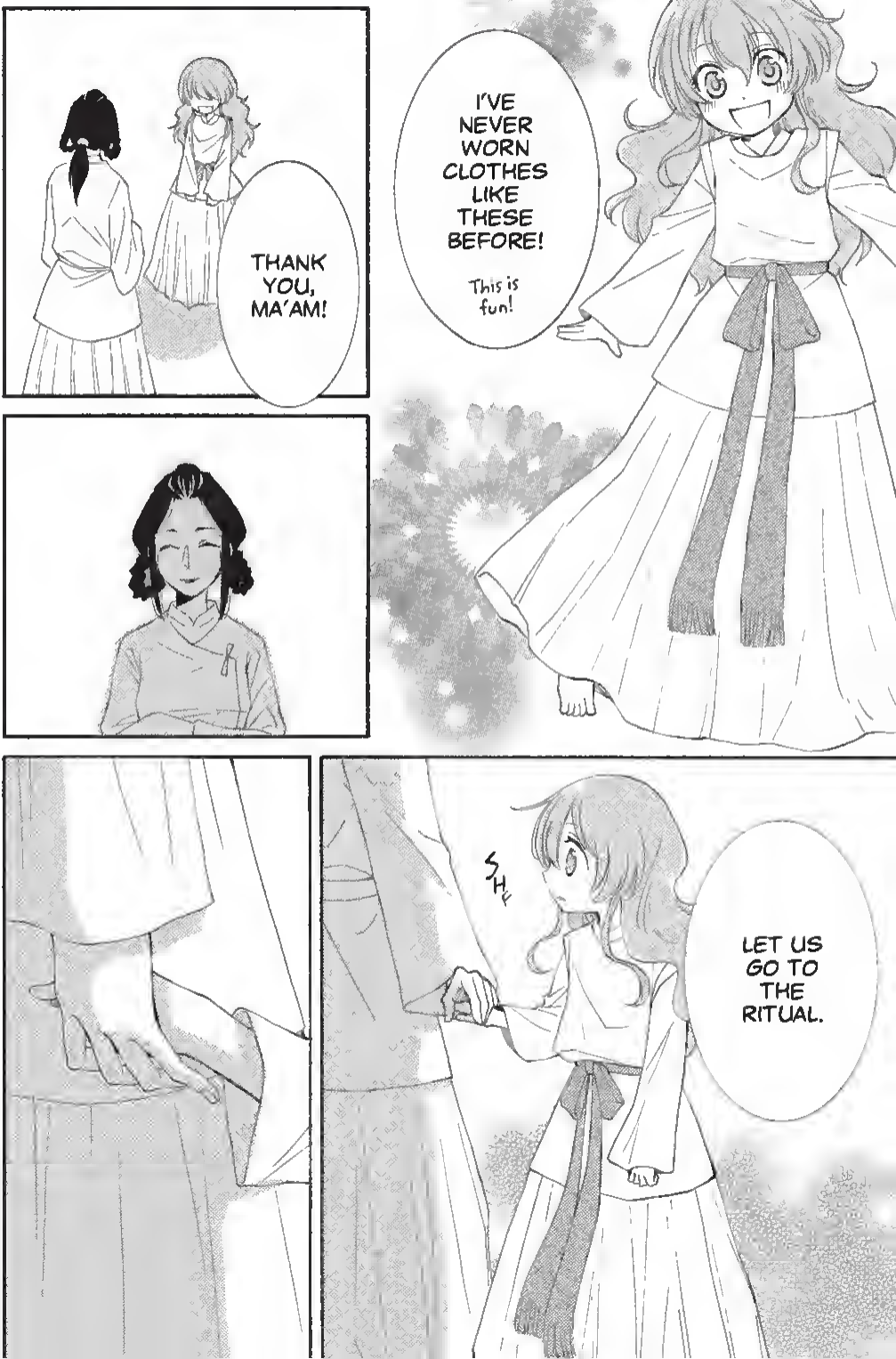
MOM...
DAD...
IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT!
I'LL FIND YOUR MOM FOR YOU!
CLASP
OH!

...? TEAR...? Mole...?
HEY, YOU'RE KIND OF A HUNK. NOT AS MUCH AS MY DAD, THOUGH.
Hunk ...?
TEAR-DROP MOLE.
THEY ALWAYS SAY I'D BE AN ANGEL IF I JUST KEPT MY MOUTH SHUT.
I'M NOT REALLY SURE, BUT SOMEHOW I UNDER-STAND.
HEH HEH
ANGEL?
...
YOU REALLY ARE...AN UNUSUAL GIRL.
MY NAME IS SUBARU.

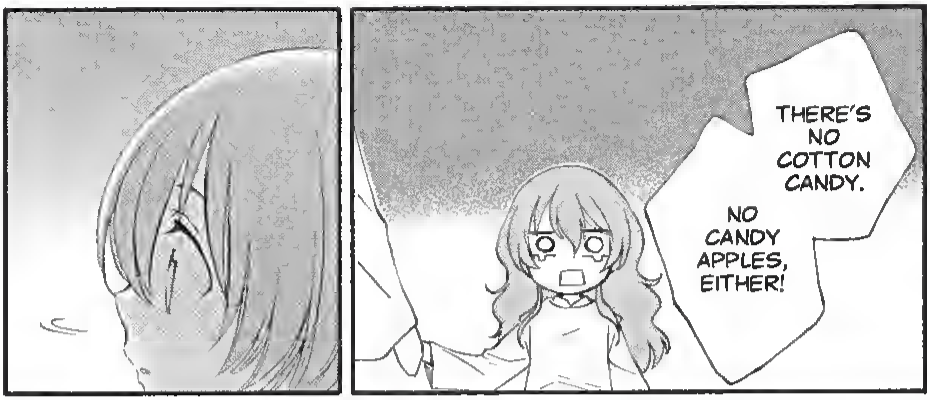
HEH HEH. I GOT LOST, BUT AT LEAST I FOUND A NEW FRIEND.
I'M ASAHI.
HEY, SUBARU. THERE'S A LAKE IN THE FOREST, RIGHT?
HM? YES...
CAN YOU TAKE ME? I FEEL LIKE I COULD FIND MY WAY HOME FROM THERE...
I-I CAN'T. WE'RE NOT REALLY ALLOWED TO GO NEAR THERE TOO OFTEN.
WHY NOT?
THAT'S WHERE THE WATER DRAGON GOD LIVES.

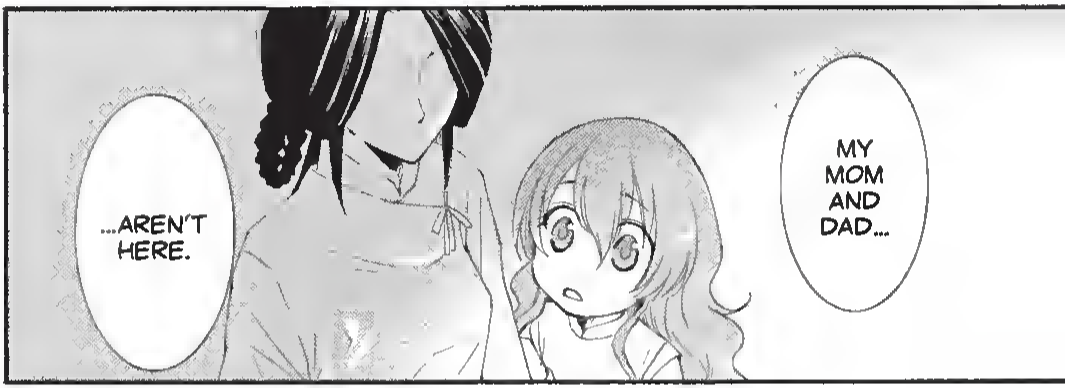
PFFT...
AH HA HA!
THAT WAS A JOKE, RIGHT?
WHICH PART?
I GET IT! YOU'RE THE KIND OF KID WHO STILL BELIEVES IN SANTA!
ALL RIGHT, I'LL TELL YOU! I BELIEVED IN HIM UNTIL LAST YEAR!
AND YOU KNOW WHAT? DAD WAS DOING IT THE WHOLE TIME!
SANTA...?
?
?
?
PWING

RITUAL ...?
WE GO TO SAY PRAYERS OF THANKS TO THE WATER GOD FOR HIS BLESS-INGS.
SO, LIKE A FESTI-VAL?
OH, I KNOW! THE RITUAL IS HAPPENING SOON.
WE'LL BE ABLE TO GO THEN.
I BET MY MOM AND DAD WILL GO THERE LOOKING FOR ME!
WILL THERE BE COTTON CANDY?
?
WOW!
... THAT HAD SUDDENLY BEFALLEN ME.
I WAS VERY EASY-GOING ABOUT THE DESTINY...


THANK YOU, MA'AM!
I'VE NEVER WORN CLOTHES LIKE THESE BEFORE!
This is fun!
SHE
LET US GO TO THE RITUAL.

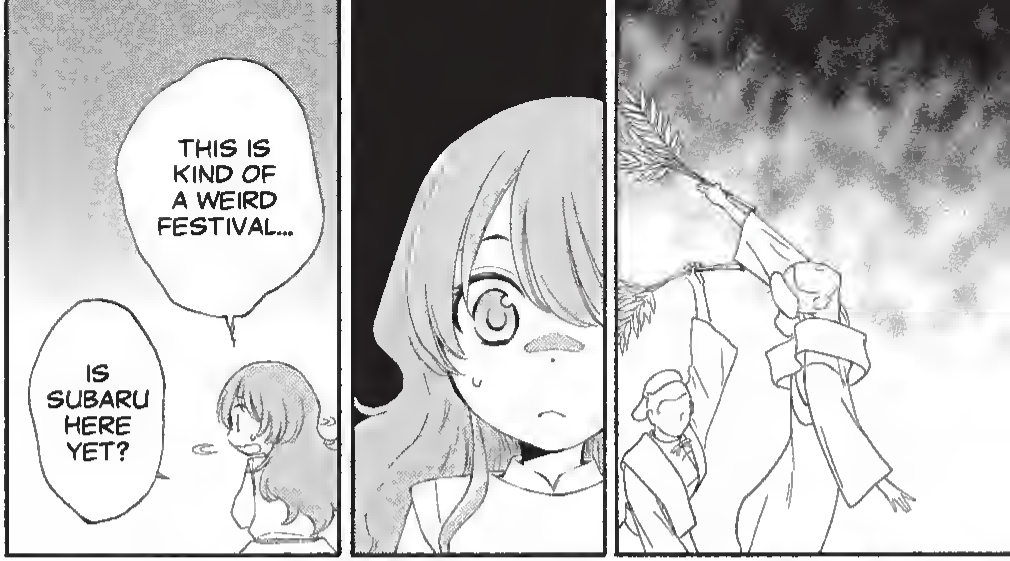
HE'LL BE ALONG LATER.
WHERE'S SUBARU?
THIS FEELS LIKE MOM'S HAND...
I...
...REALLY HAD NO IDEA...


THERE'S NO COTTON CANDY.
NO CANDY APPLES, EITHER!


MY MOM AND DAD...
...AREN'T HERE.

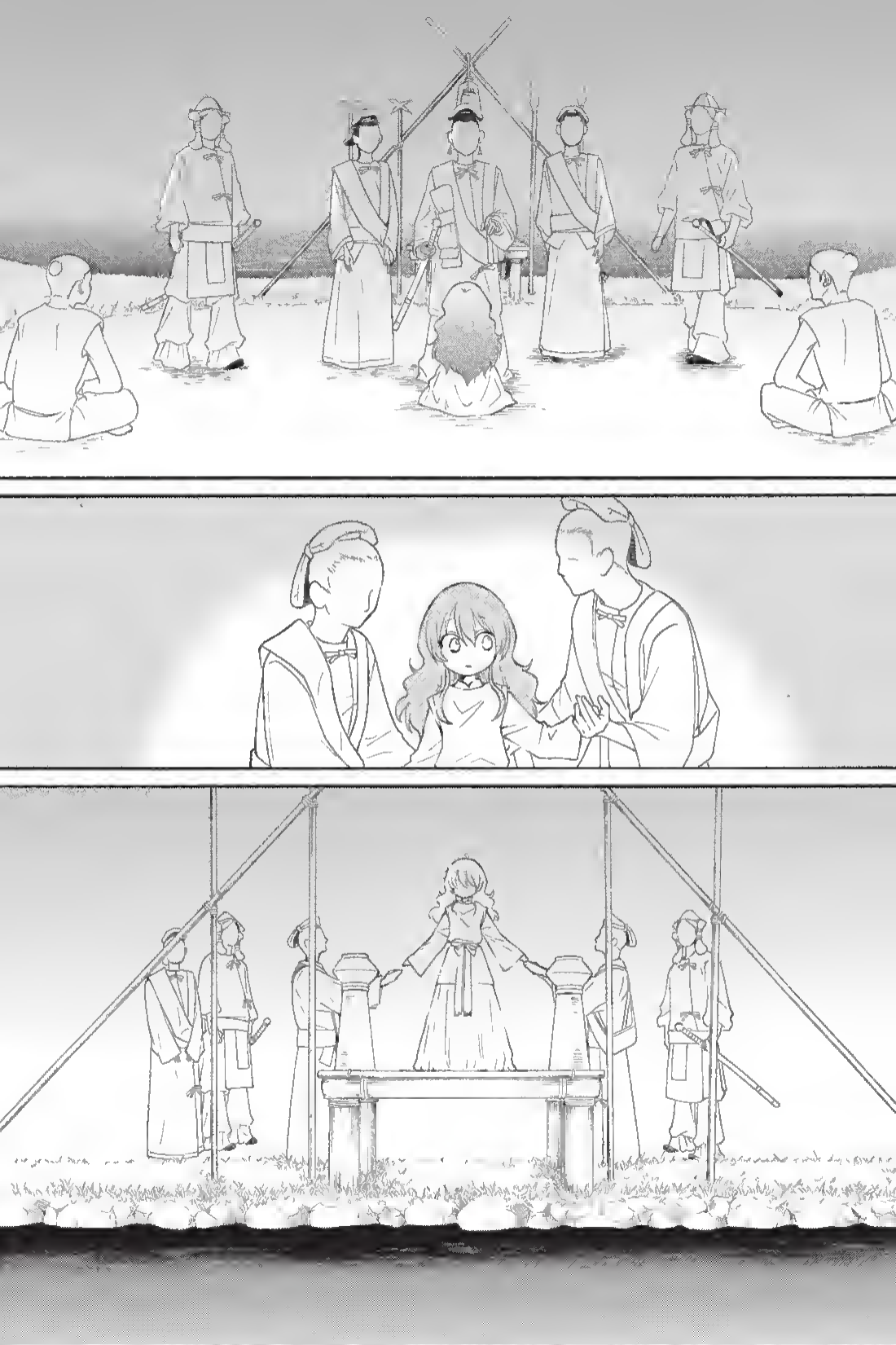
I SEE... HOW UNFORTUNATE...
...ABOUT THE DARKNESS.

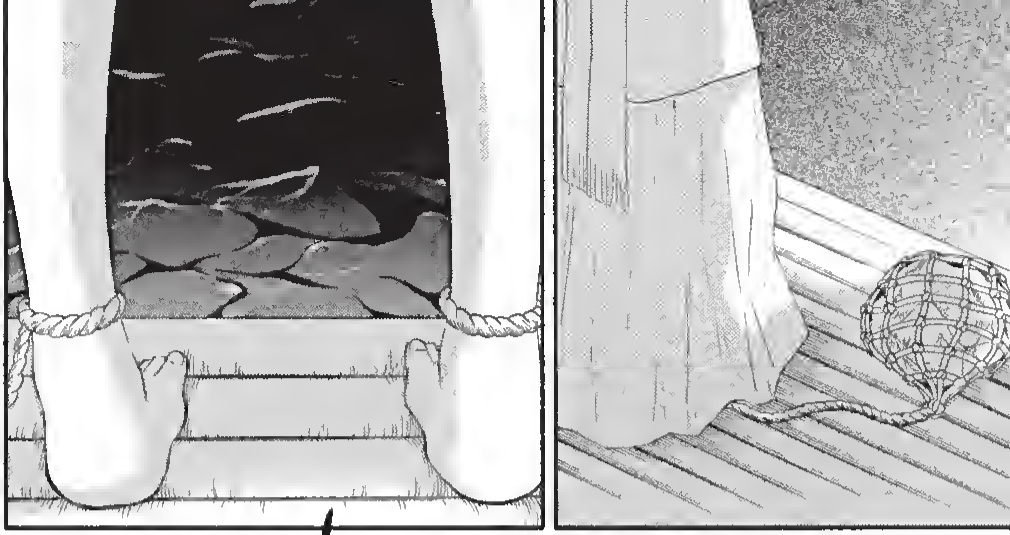
Haaah!
TWITCH
IT IS BEGIN-NING... FOLLOW ME.

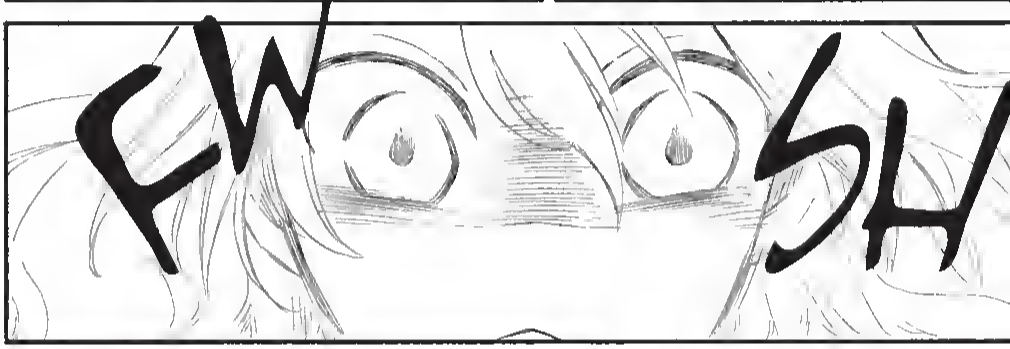

THIS IS KIND OF A WEIRD FESTIVAL...
IS SUBARU HERE YET?

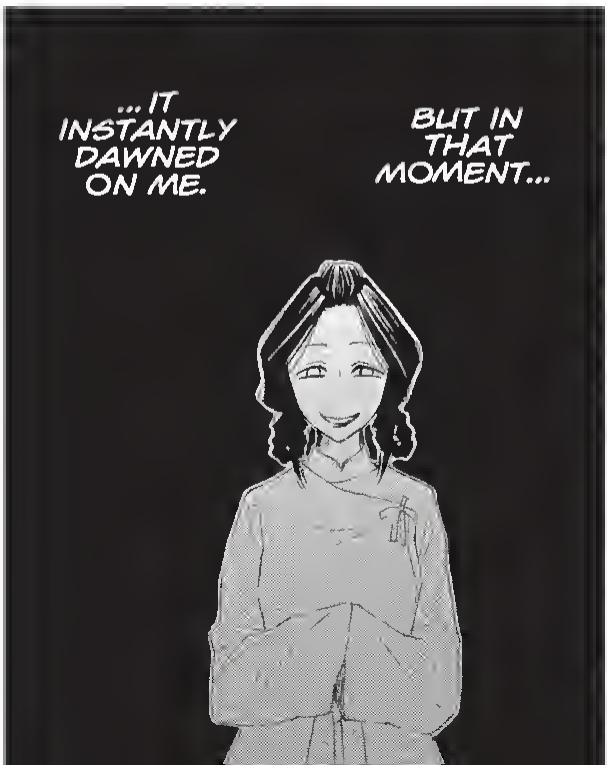
PLEASE COME AND TAKE HER AS YOUR WIFE.
WE OFFER THIS MAIDEN OF OUR VILLAGE.
O NOBLE WATER DRAGON GOD WHO DWELLS IN THIS LAKE, WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR DAILY BLESSINGS.

IS SOMEBODY GETTING MARRIED?
A WIFE?

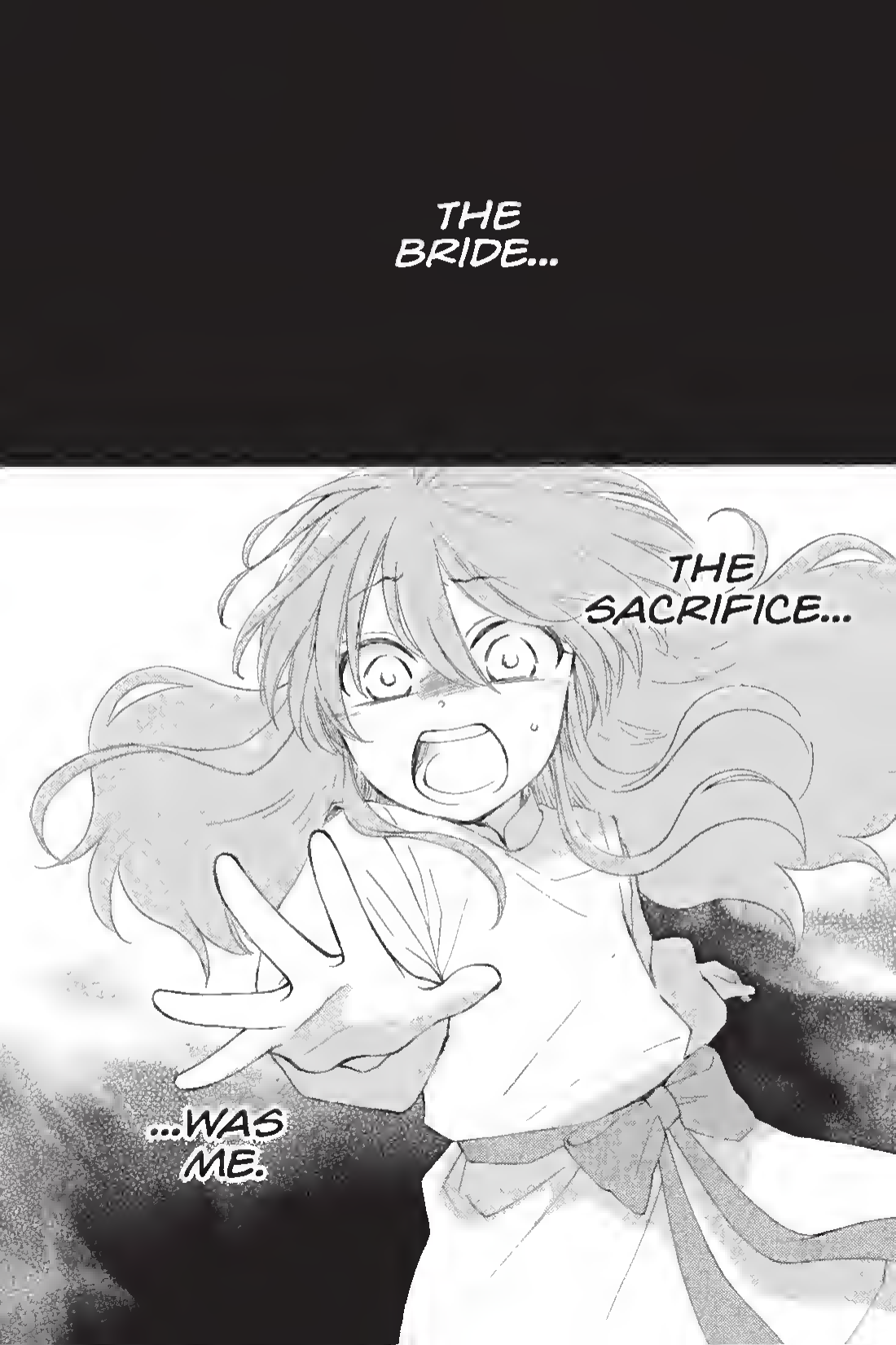





FW
SH


...IT INSTANTLY DAWNED ON ME.
BUT IN THAT MOMENT...

UNTIL THEN...
...I HADN'T UNDER-STOOD A THING.


THE BRIDE...
THE SACRIFICE...
...WAS ME.

SPLOOSH
LET ME GO!
ASAHI...!
ASAHIIII!!
ASAHI!

MOTHER ...!
WHY?! WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT TO HER?!
YOU PROMISED TO TREAT HER LIKE YOUR OWN DAUGHTER!
A CHILD OF THIS FAMILY!
YES... SHE'S MY DAUGH-TER.
AND WE OFFERED HER UP TO THE GOD!

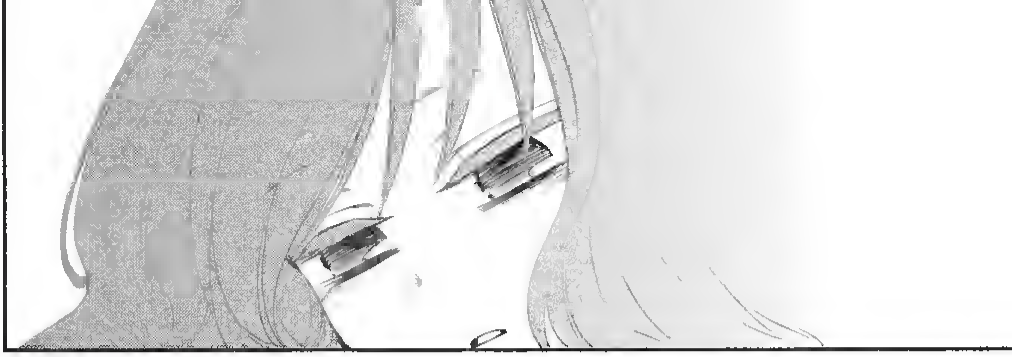
AND WON'T THE WATER DRAGON GOD BE PLEASED?
OUR FAMILY'S PROSPERITY WILL CONTINUE! WE WILL FLOURISH!
M-MOTHER ...

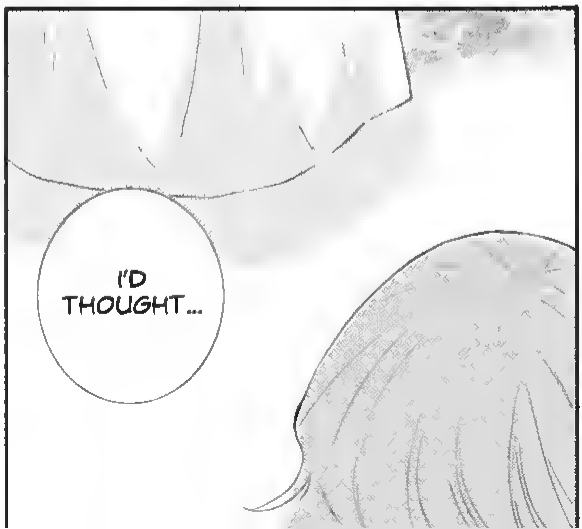
IT WAS...
...ALL A DREAM, THEN.

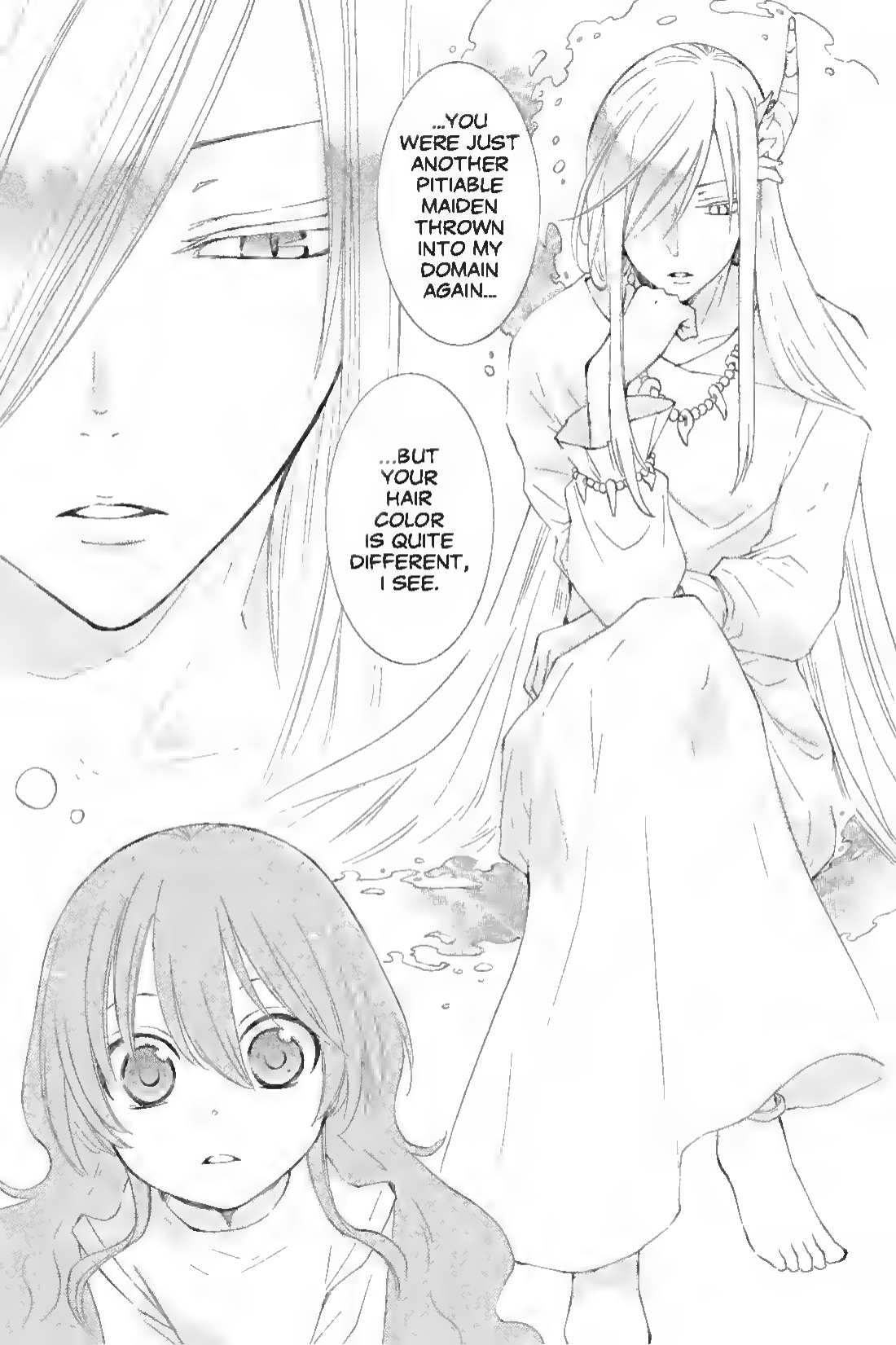
THIS HAS TO BE A DREAM.

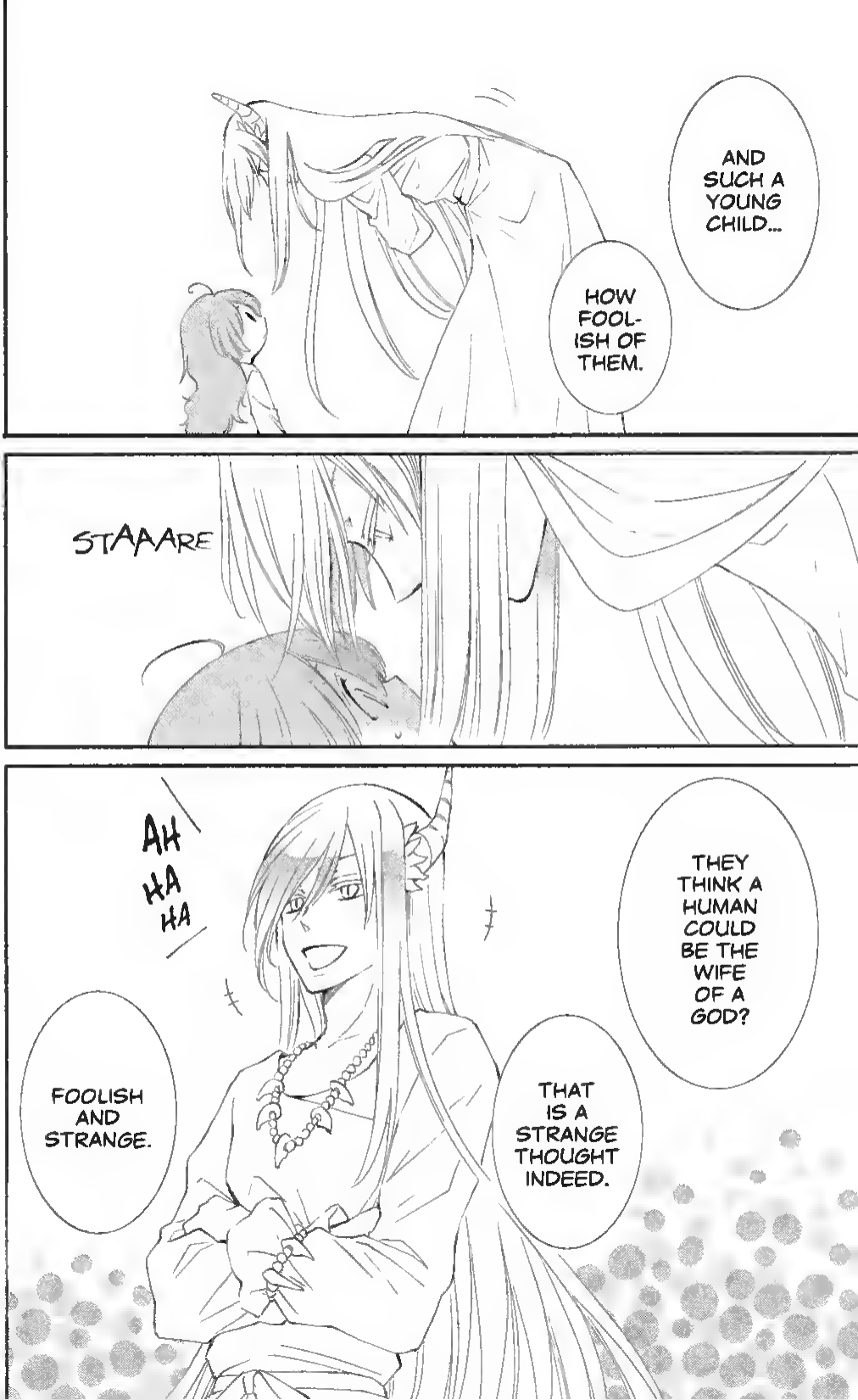
THERE CAN'T BE ANYTHING SO SCARY IN THE WORLD.

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS GODS.




I'D THOUGHT...


...YOU WERE JUST ANOTHER PITIABLE MAIDEN THROWN INTO MY DOMAIN AGAIN...
...BUT YOUR HAIR COLOR IS QUITE DIFFERENT, I SEE.


AND SUCH A YOUNG CHILD...
HOW FOOL-ISH OF THEM.
STAAARE
AH HA HA
THEY THINK A HUMAN COULD BE THE WIFE OF A GOD?
THAT IS A STRANGE THOUGHT INDEED.
FOOLISH AND STRANGE.

HUH?
MAIDEN!
IT'S BEEN 500 YEARS SINCE I'VE LAUGHED.
DO YOU FIND MY LAUGH STRANGE?
...
TAP
TAP
I'M STILL DREAMING...
I...
NOW, THEN.

I WILL MAKE YOU MY BRIDE.
VERY WELL.

YOU CAN'T... DO THIS...

...DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?
WHAT...
OUR FAMILY HAS BECOME POWERFUL.
IN THOSE YEARS, OUR VILLAGE HAS PROSPERED.
WE HAVE SACRIFICED MAIDENS FOR MANY YEARS.
IT WAS FOR THE SAKE OF OUR VILLAGE.
SUBARU... YOU MUST BECOME STRONG AS WELL.

YES...

...MOTHER.

I'LL BECOME STRONG.

AND WITH THAT POWER...

...I WILL STRIKE BACK...

...AT YOU...

...AND THE GOD!

Hello, I'm Rei Toma, and this is volume 1 of **The Water Dragon's Bride**. It ended up being another fantasy story. I hope you're all excited for it!

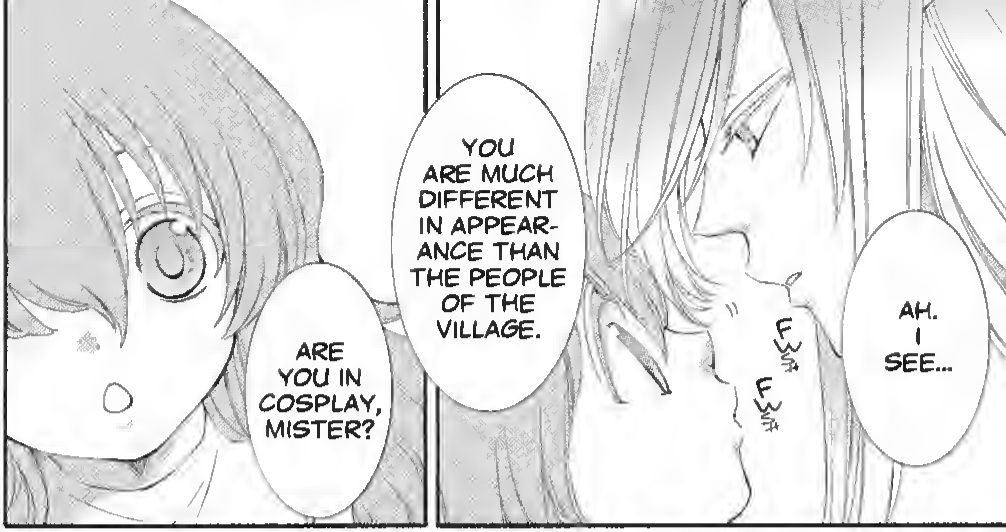
The setting is an ancient Japan-style fantasy world.
I was trying for something like the Kofun period. This is an age characterized by haniwa clay figures, magatama beads and the side-knot hairdo. It's a very interesting sort of era! I'm looking forward to getting used to drawing it.

I can't wait until I get to draw all the water god's water scenes in color. There're so many things I want to draw!

CHAPTER 2

HEY...
"VERY WELL.
"I WILL MAKE YOU MY BRIDE."
ARE YOU A MOLESTER?
MISTER...
YOU'RE A PERV, MISTER!
WHAT IS A "MOLES-TER"?

JUST ONE MOMENT. I DO NOT KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN BY "MOLESTER" OR "PERV."
BUT IT IS BEYOND UNCOUTH TO CALL ME "MISTER."
IN ADDITION, WHY ARE YOU NOT AMAZED? I AM AN AWESOME GOD, BEAUTIFUL AND AGELESS. I HAVE LIVED FOR MILLENIA.
YOU ARE NOT ACTING AS HUMANS DO. HUMANS SEE MY NOBLE BEARING AND EXCLAIM, "AHH! HE IS BEAUTIFUL, AND YET I AM FRIGHTENED! PLEASE SAVE ME!"
THEY BECOME FLUSTERED AND MAKE A COMMOTION, REVEALING EXACTLY HOW UNREFINED THEY ARE.

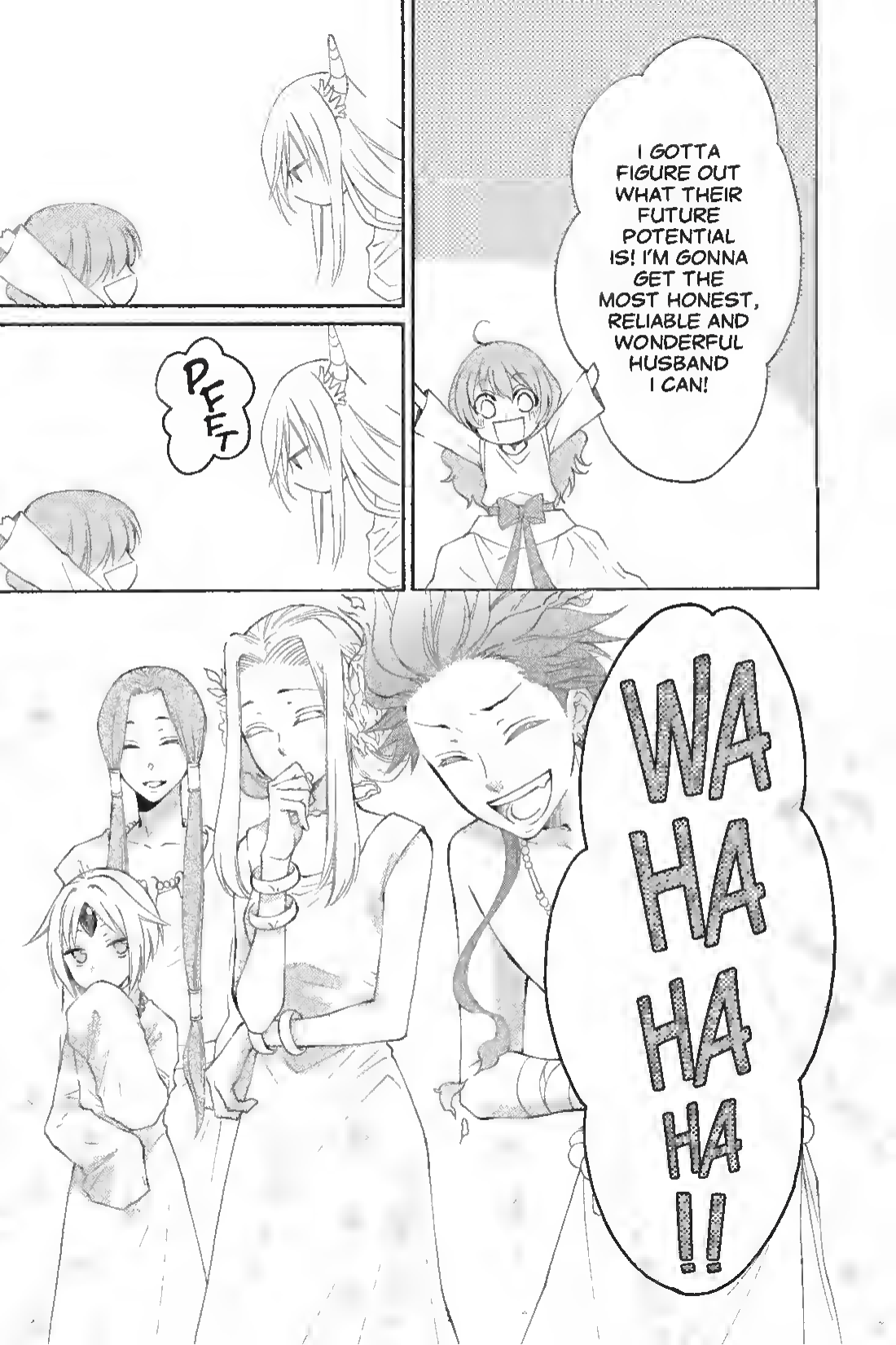

ARE YOU IN COSPLAY, MISTER?
YOU ARE MUCH DIFFERENT IN APPEARANCE THAN THE PEOPLE OF THE VILLAGE.
AH. I SEE...

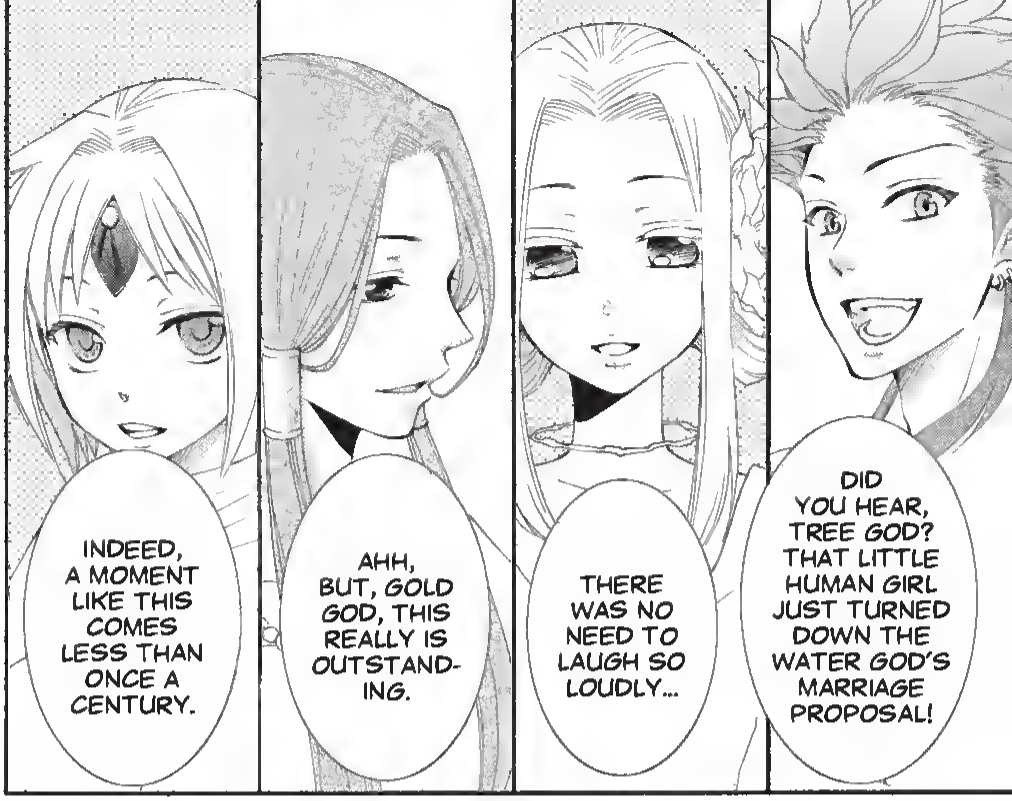
IT MEANS YOU LOOK LIKE A GROWN-UP BUT YOU LIKE LITTLE KIDS!
VERY WELL. WHAT IS A MOLESTER? WHAT IS A PERV?
ANOTHER WORD I DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

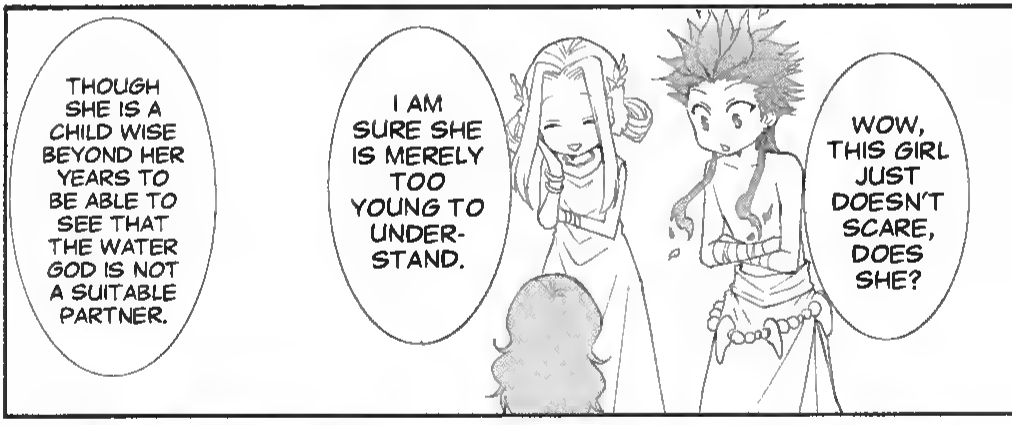
I SEE...
YOU HUMANS ARE CONCERNED OVER SOME VERY PETTY THINGS...

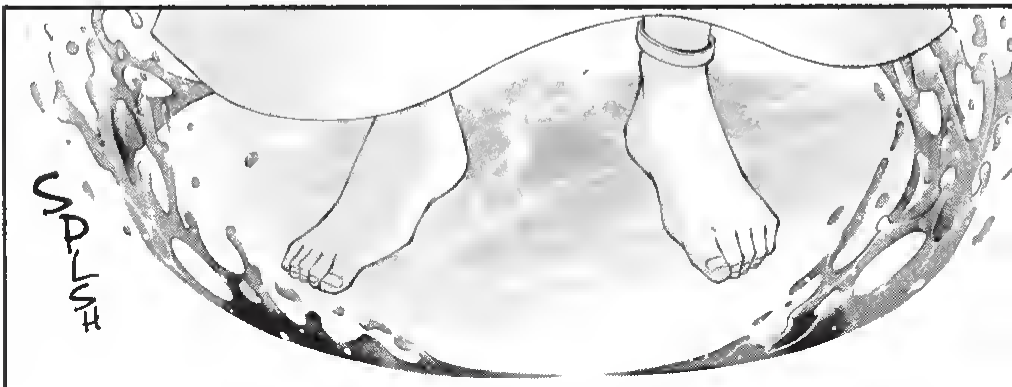
ACHOO
Oh... This is saliva and mucus.
I WILL MAKE YOU MY BRIDE...
WELL. I SUPPOSE YOU CAN PROVIDE ME SOME ENTERTAIN-MENT. GOOD.
...BUT I WILL WAIT UNTIL YOU HAVE FINISHED MATURING.

NO, THANK YOU.
OKAY?
JUST A MOMENT. DID YOU REFUSE ME?
YEP!
I'VE GOT A TON OF PEOPLE ON MY FUTURE HUSBAND LIST!
LIKE SATOSHI, TARO, JIRO...


I GOTTA FIGURE OUT WHAT THEIR FUTURE POTENTIAL IS! I'M GONNA GET THE MOST HONEST, RELIABLE AND WONDERFUL HUSBAND I CAN!
DEET
WA HA HA HA !!

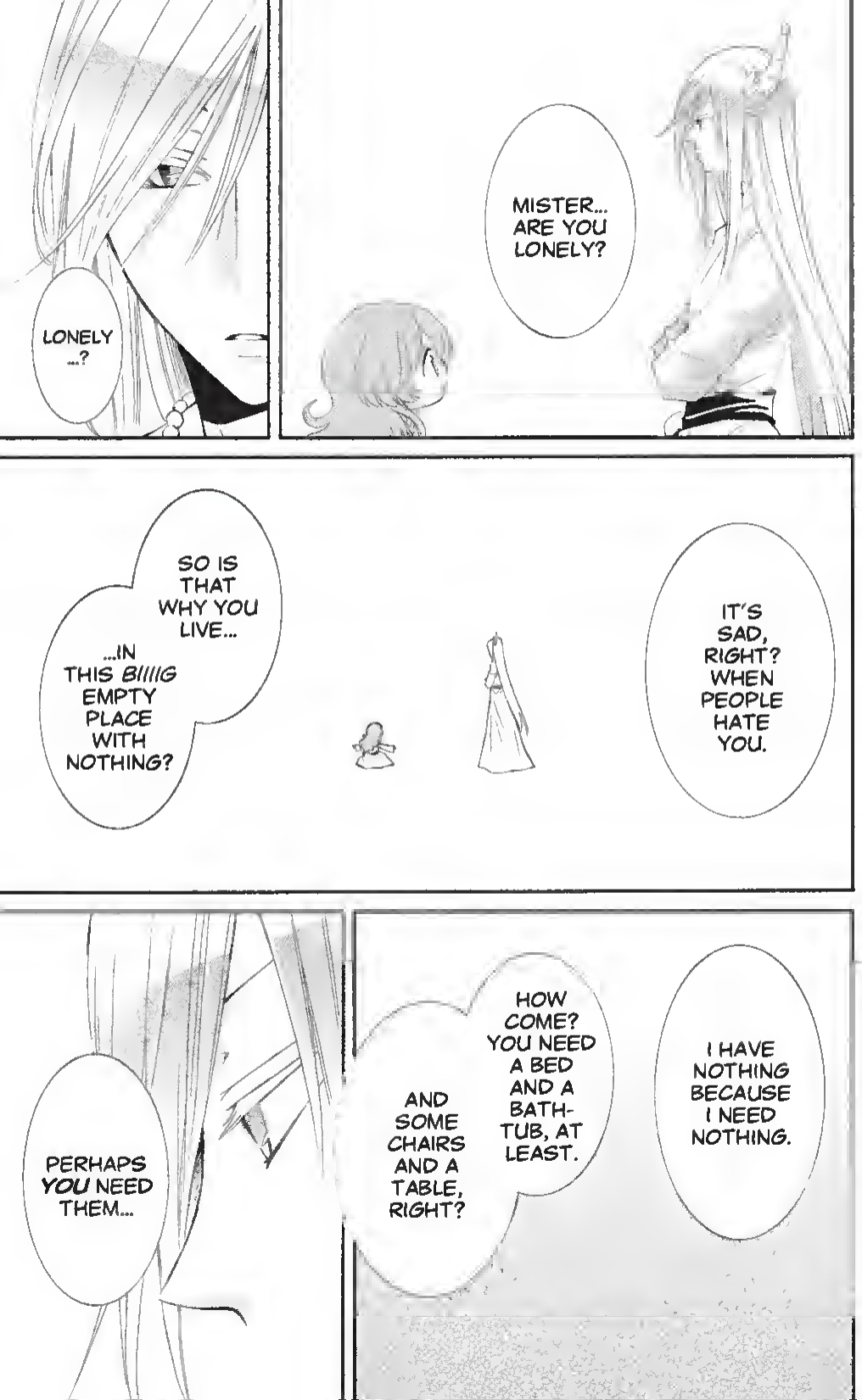

DID YOU HEAR, TREE GOD? THAT LITTLE HUMAN GIRL JUST TURNED DOWN THE WATER GOD'S MARRIAGE PROPOSAL!
THERE WAS NO NEED TO LAUGH SO LOUDLY...
AHH, BUT, GOLD GOD, THIS REALLY IS OUTSTANDING.
INDEED, A MOMENT LIKE THIS COMES LESS THAN ONCE A CENTURY.


WOW, THIS GIRL JUST DOESN'T SCARE, DOES SHE?
I AM SURE SHE IS MERELY TOO YOUNG TO UNDERSTAND.
THOUGH SHE IS A CHILD WISE BEYOND HER YEARS TO BE ABLE TO SEE THAT THE WATER GOD IS NOT A SUITABLE PARTNER.

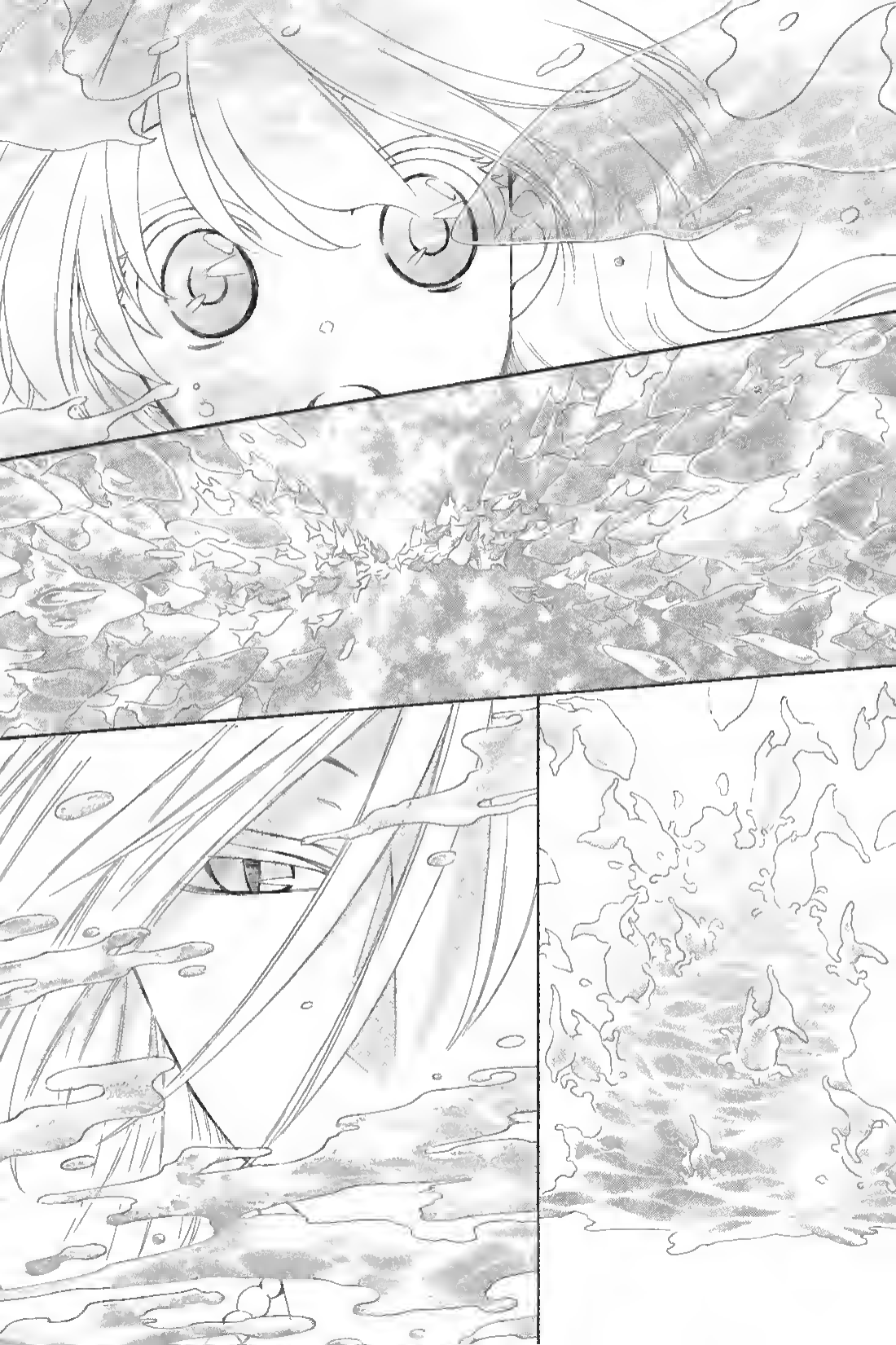

SPLASH

YOU VEX ME.
BE SILENT.
OOH, THE COLDEST OF GLARES. HOW FRIGHTEN-ING.
SEE, THIS IS WHY NOBODY LIKES YOU. YOU'RE SO BORING, AND YOU CAN'T EVEN TAKE A JOKE!
DO NOT MIS-UNDER-STAND.
LONG BEFORE YOU HATED ME...
IT WAS I...
...WHO HAD NO LOVE FOR YOU!

WOO
YAY
OH, JUST IGNORE HIM. LET'S GO OUTSIDE AND PLAY.
ALL RIGHT, I GET IT.
EVEN AFTER ALL THIS TIME, YOU'RE AS UNPLEASANT AS EVER.
HUH?
THOSE PEOPLE DISAPPEARED.
BLINK
AH.

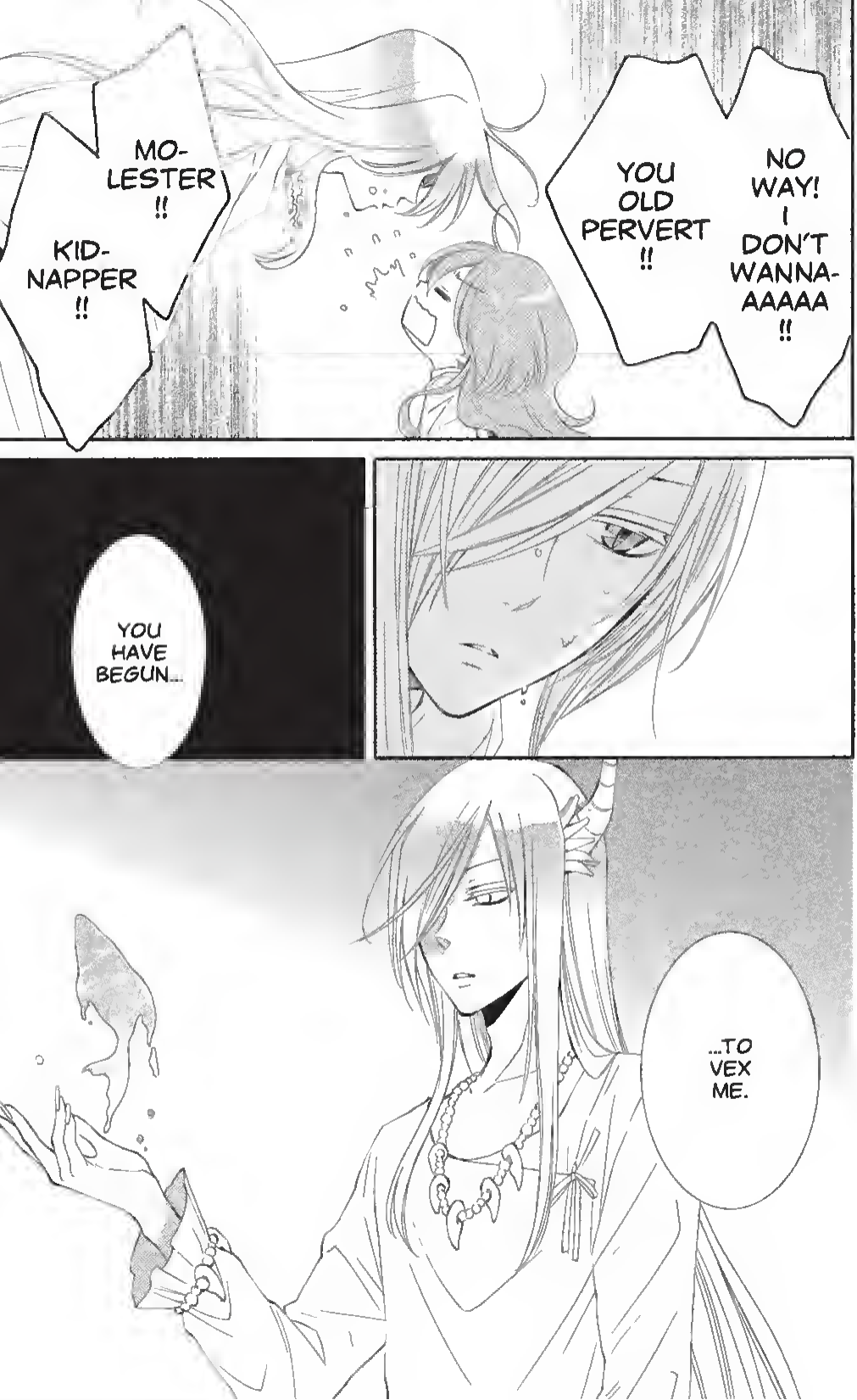

LONELY ...?
MISTER... ARE YOU LONELY?
IT'S SAD, RIGHT? WHEN PEOPLE HATE YOU.
I HAVE NOTHING BECAUSE I NEED NOTHING.
HOW COME? YOU NEED A BED AND A BATH-TUB, AT LEAST.
AND SOME CHAIRS AND A TABLE, RIGHT?
SO IS THAT WHY YOU LIVE... ...IN THIS *BIIIIG* EMPTY PLACE WITH NOTHING?
PERHAPS *YOU* NEED THEM...

WELL...
I SUPPOSE I CAN SHOW OFF A BIT.



WOOOW! THAT'S SOOO COOL!!
YOU LIKE IT, EH?
BUT I DON'T NEED IT.
I'M GONNA GO HOME.
YOU CANNOT GO HOME.
YOU BELONG TO ME NOW.

I'M GONNA GO HOME!
MY MOM AND DAD ARE WAITING FOR ME.
NO.
STOP BEING SELFISH.
EMBRACE YOUR FATE.
YOU WERE MERELY PARTED FROM THEM A TOUCH SOONER THAN YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN.
ALL HUMANS EVEN-TUALLY DIE.


NO WAY! I DON'T WANNA-AAAAA !!
YOU OLD PERVERT !!
MO-LESTER !!
KID-NAPPER !!
YOU HAVE BEGUN...
...TO VEX ME.

FWOOSH
HAH...!
FWSH
AH!
GULP
KOHH
...!
SHUDDER

I HAVE COLLECTED YOUR VOICE.
I WILL RETURN IT WHEN YOU BECOME MY BRIDE.
HA HA HA!
WERE YOU TO RETURN TO THE VILLAGE, WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD BECOME OF YOU?
THEY...

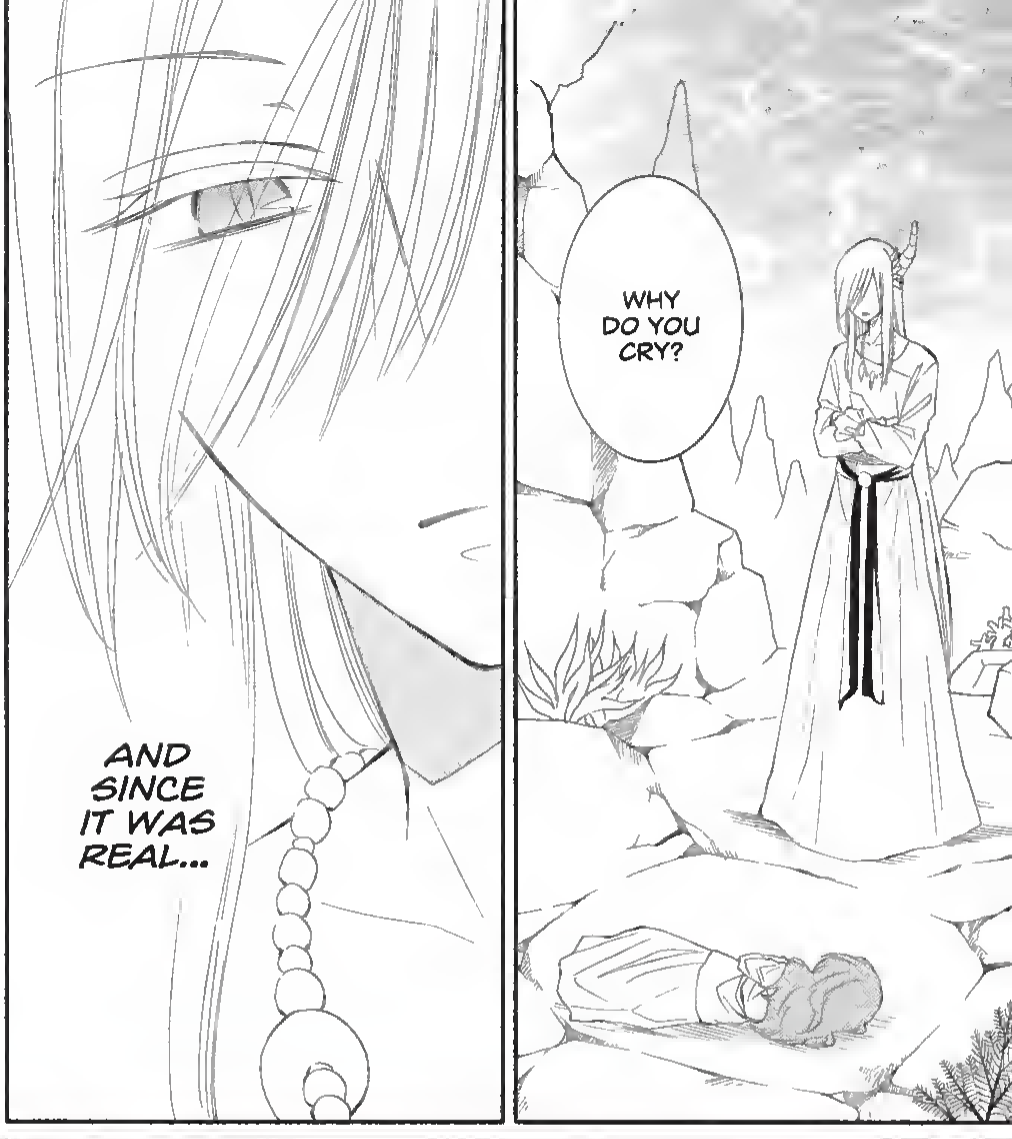
THEY SANK YOU TO THE BOTTOM OF THE LAKE FOR WEALTH AND PROSPERITY!
HUMANS ARE SUCH GREEDY AND VULGAR CREATURES!
THAT WAS A DREAM!
THIS IS A DREAM!
MY MOM AND DAD WOULD NEVER DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT!

WAKE UP.
IT'S A DREAM.
IT'S A DREAM.
COME ON!
WAKE UP.
WAKE UP.
IN THAT STRANGE PLACE...
COME ON...!
I REALLY BE-LIEVED ...
...I FELL ASLEEP.

...THAT IF I WOKE UP...
...THIS AWFUL DREAM WOULD BE OVER.
I SLEPT FOR DAYS.
THE FIRST DAY, I WOKE UP DISMAYED THAT I WAS STILL THERE.

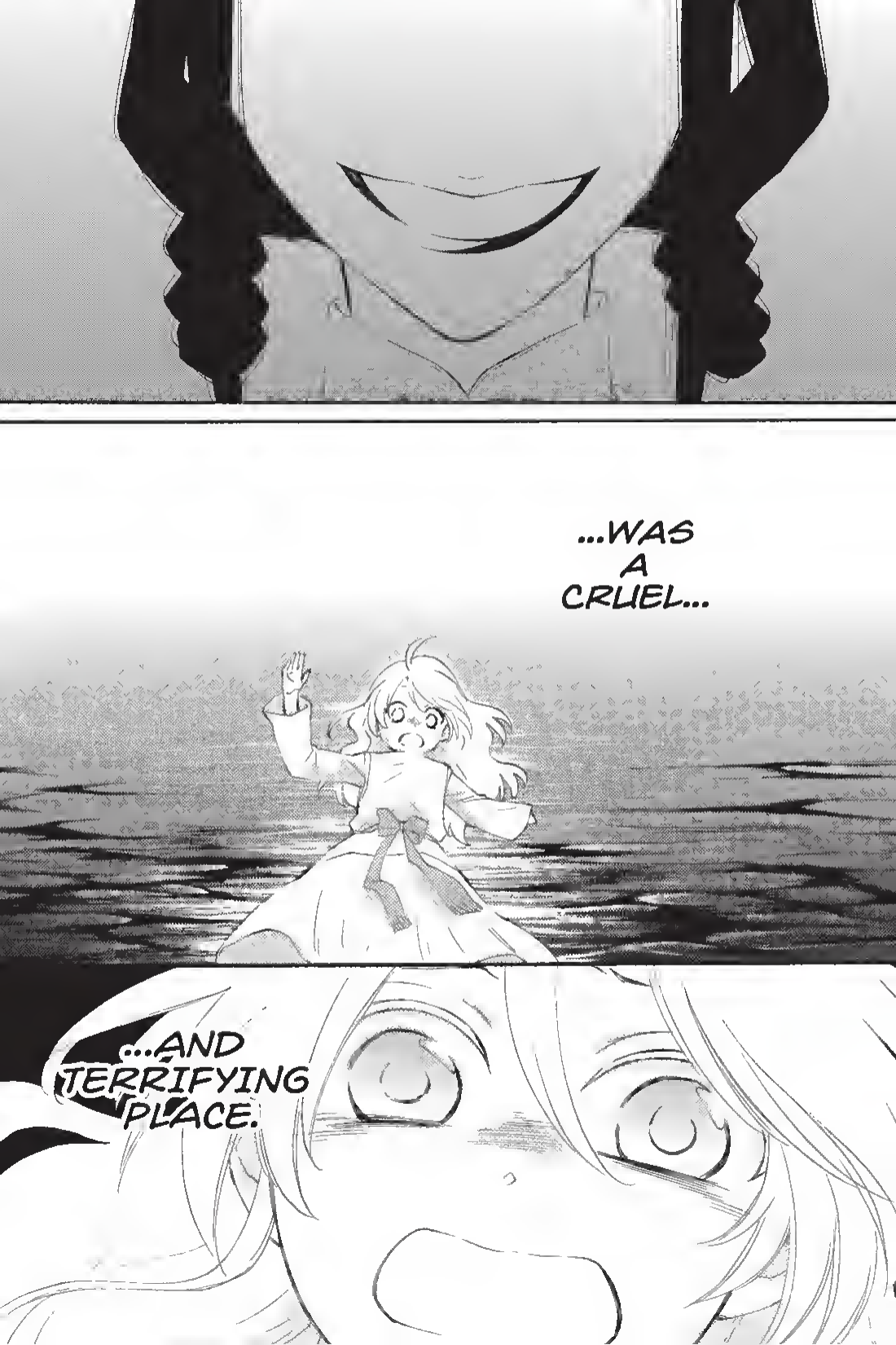
THE SEC-OND DAY...
...I WONDERED HOW I COULD BE SO HUNGRY IF I WAS DREAMING.
THE THIRD DAY...
...MY STOMACH WAS SO EMPTY IT STARTED TO SCARE ME.

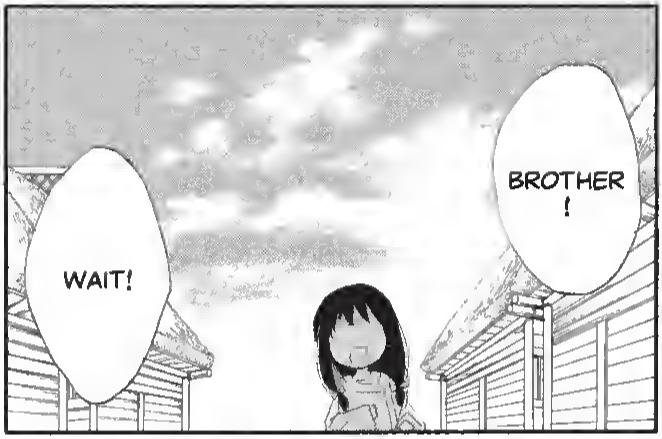
I FELL TO MY KNEES.
TEARS RAN FROM MY EYES.
AND SOME-HOW I UNDER-STOOD...
...THAT IT WASN'T A DREAM.

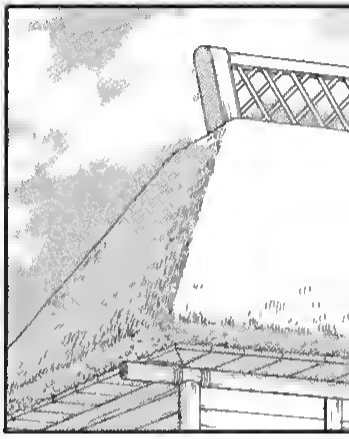


...I FINALLY REALIZED...

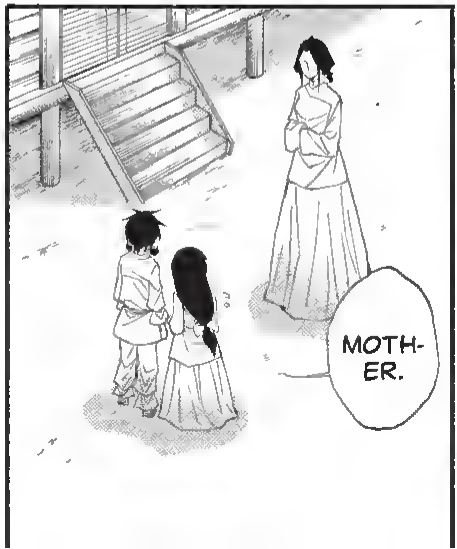
...THAT THIS WORLD...


...WAS
A
CRUEL...
...AND
TERRIFYING
PLACE.


WAIT!
BROTHER!



TMP

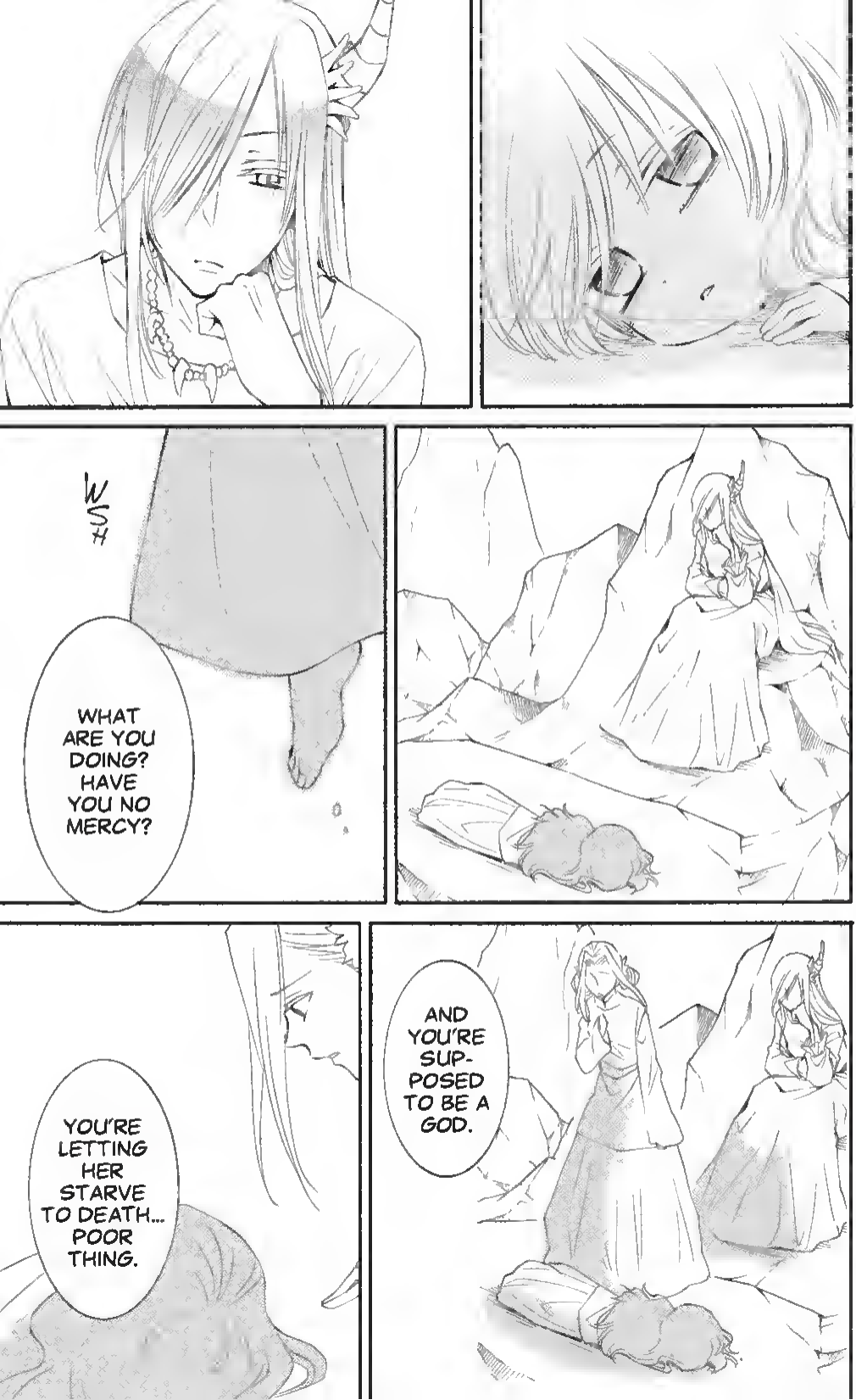

MOTH-
ER.

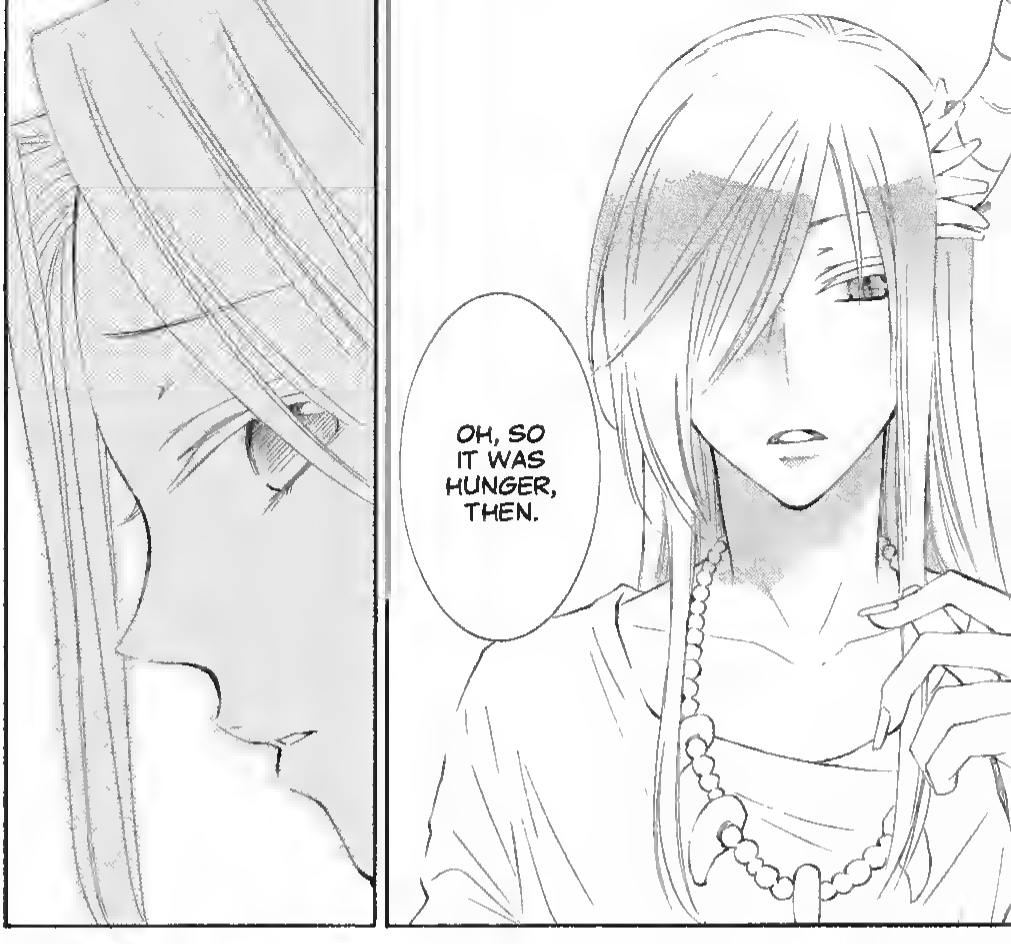
IF MOTHER FINDS YOU, SHE'LL BE MAD.
BROTHER, ARE YOU GOING OUT AGAIN?
BACK TO THAT LAKE?

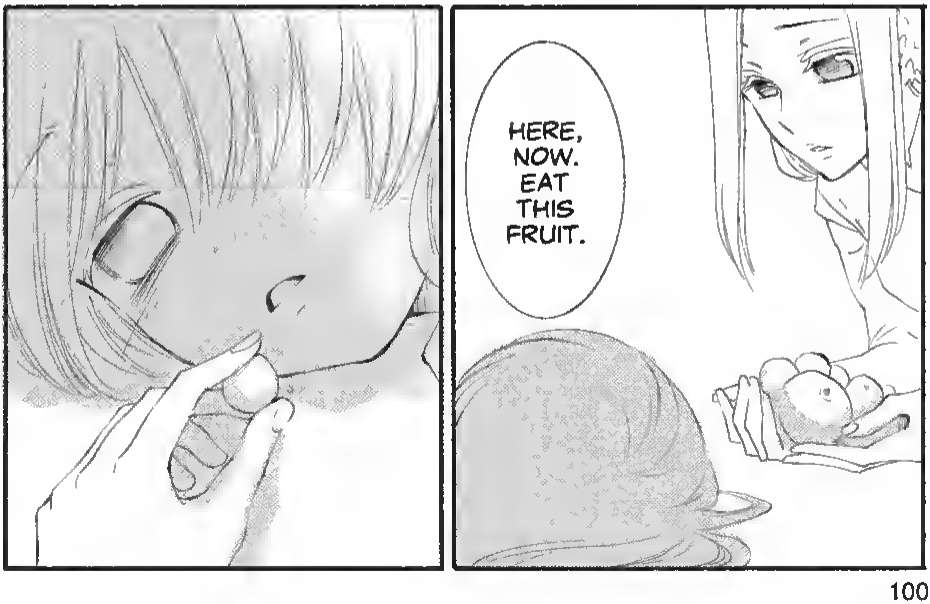
SUBARU
...
DO YOU SEEK THE CRUEL SIGHT OF THAT GIRL'S FISH-EATEN BODY?
LEAVE THIS MATTER ALONE.
THERE IS NO WAY FOR YOU TO BRING HER BACK.
HE HAS TAKEN HER AWAY.
WE OFFERED HER SOUL TO THE GOD.

AND YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SELFISHLY OFFERED HER UP.
BROTHER ...
I COULD NEVER GIVE UP ON HER.
BROTH-ER!!
BYE! I'M HEADED OUT!

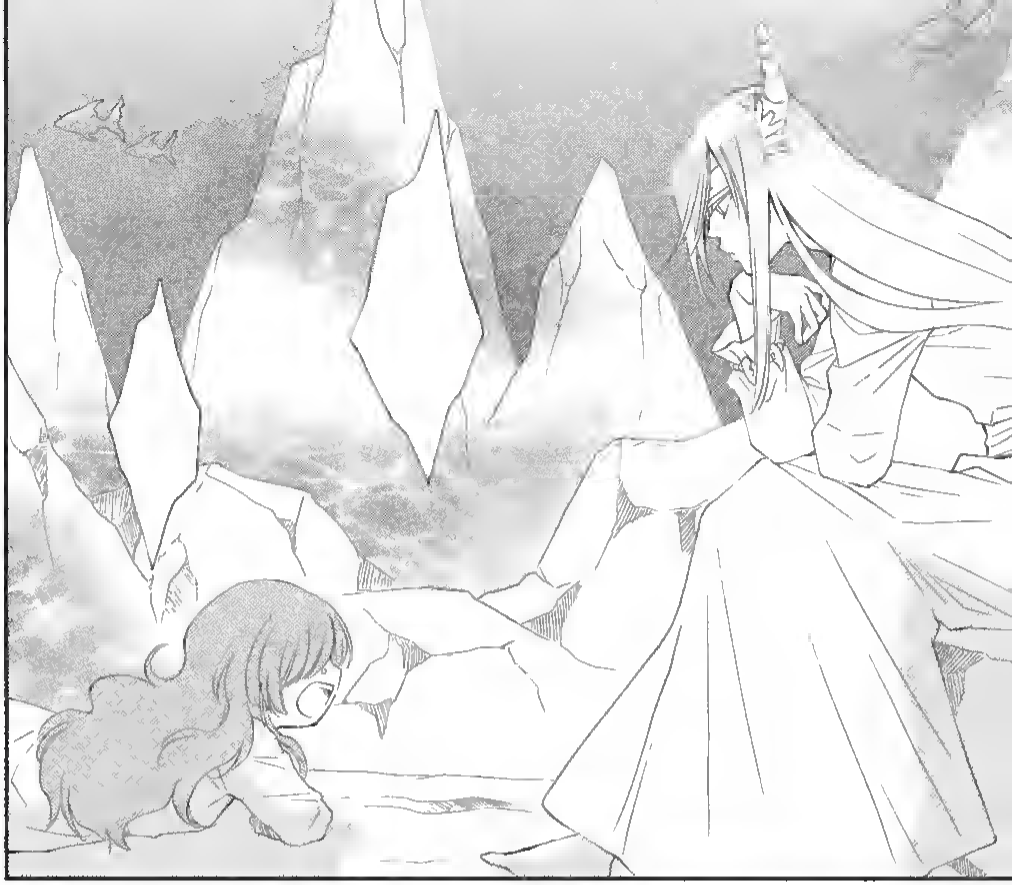
ASAHI'S FACE, LOST IN TERROR...
I CAN'T GET IT OUT OF MY HEAD.
HER FACE IS BURNED INTO MY MEMORY.
IF ONLY I HAD CAUGHT IT.
HER HAND, OUTSTRETCHED TOWARD ME...
I WAS THE ONE WHO KILLED YOU.
I...
IF I HADN'T BEGGED THEM TO LET HER STAY WITH US...
IF I HADN'T BROUGHT HER TO THE VILLAGE...


WSH
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? HAVE YOU NO MERCY?
AND YOU'RE SUP-POSED TO BE A GOD.
YOU'RE LETTING HER STARVE TO DEATH... POOR THING.


OH, SO IT WAS HUNGER, THEN.

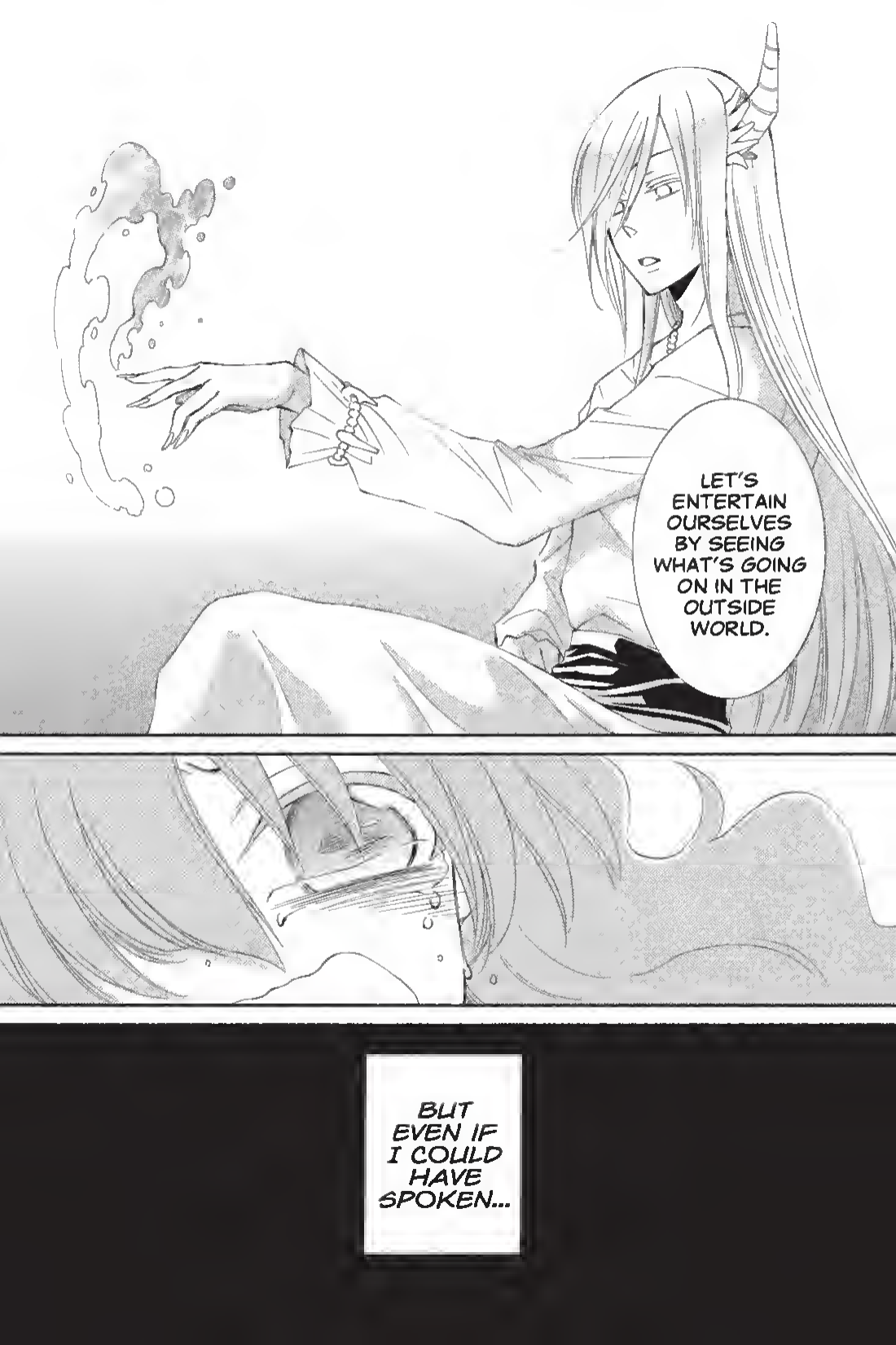

HERE, NOW. EAT THIS FRUIT.

CHOMP
CHOMP
MNCH
CHMP
MNCH
CHOMP...
WHY ARE YOU CRYING AGAIN?



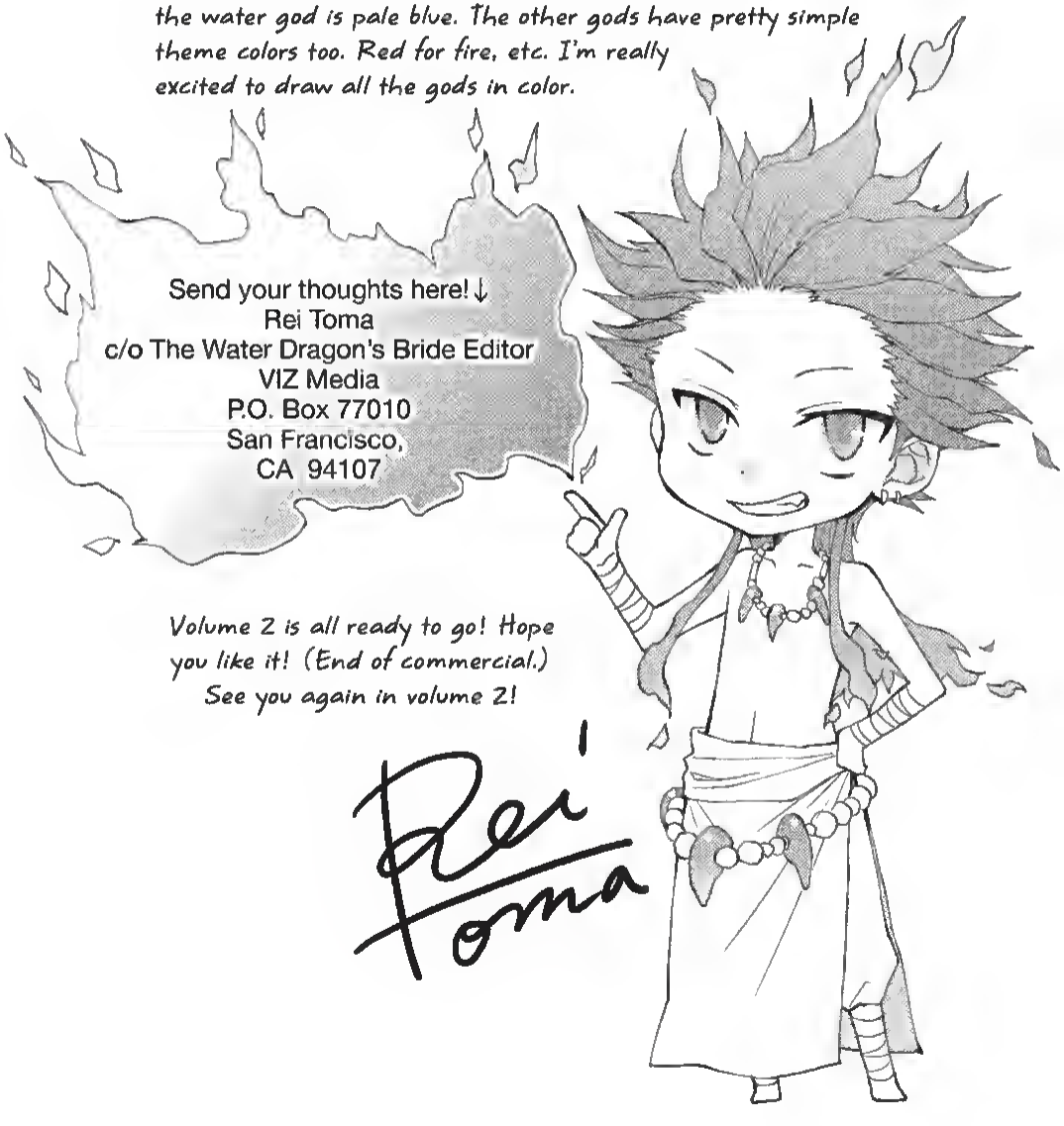
I'M MERELY HOLDING ON TO IT.
I'LL RETURN IT SOON.
YOU STOLE HER VOICE?
THOUGH I COULDN'T EVEN MAKE A SOUND...
...I FELT LIKE IF I COULD, I'D HAVE BEEN SCREAMING AT THE TOP OF MY LUNGS.

"YOU'RE NO GOD!"


LET'S ENTERTAIN OURSELVES BY SEEING WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE OUTSIDE WORLD.
BUT EVEN IF I COULD HAVE SPOKEN...

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE TOO?
...I'M SURE HE WOULDN'T HAVE UNDER-STOOD ANYWAY.

When I'm coming up with a character, I always think about them in color, so my concept has a color attached in my head. Asahi's color is pink, or maybe a light scarlet. I conceived of her having red hair, but Nakaba, the main character from my last comic, Dawn of the Arcana, was a redhead too! This time I wanted it to be a little more natural-looking. I pictured a more orangey red this time, but when I went to color it, it just ended up being pink. It's a faint scarlet or a sort of dawn-like color, so I named her Asahi, after the rising sun. Subaru's name also came from his theme color. I envisioned him as green, so the first character in his name is a word for green. Of course, the water god is pale blue. The other gods have pretty simple theme colors too. Red for fire, etc. I'm really excited to draw all the gods in color.



Send your thoughts here!↓
Rei Toma
c/o The Water Dragon's Bride Editor
VIZ Media
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco,
CA 94107

Volume 2 is all ready to go! Hope you like it! (End of commercial.)
See you again in volume 2!

Rei Toma

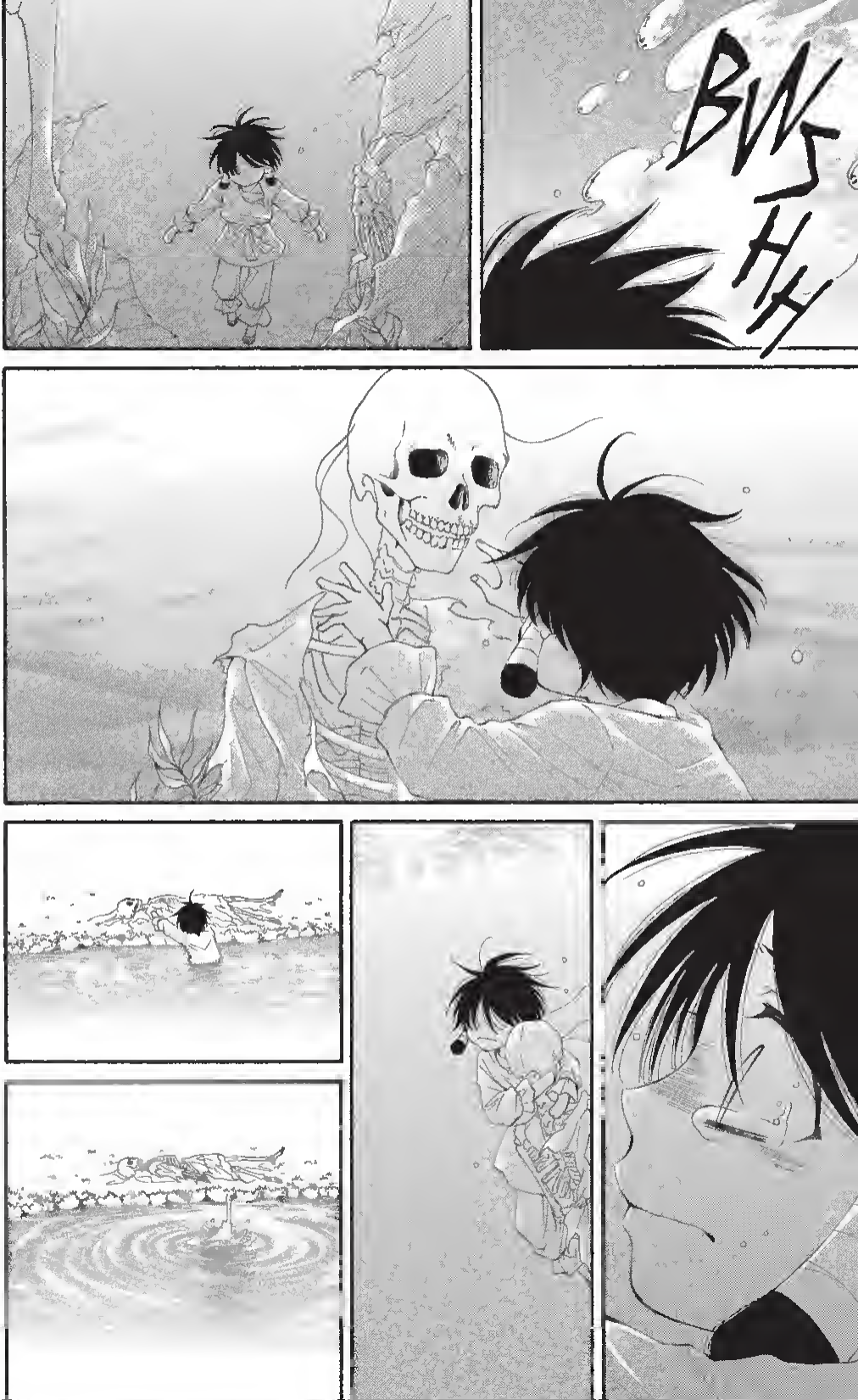
CHAPTER
3

"WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE TOO?"

ASAHI
...
PLASH

ダレ

HUF
HUF
HUF
KOFF
PUSH
HUF
HUF
HUF
...PEOPLE SACRIFICED TO THE WATER DRAGON GOD IN THE PAST...
THOSE WERE...
HUF
HUF
ASAHI.


BWSHH

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
KOFF
KOFF
UNGH
HURRK
HUF
...BUT I STILL CAN'T BREATHE.
I'M NOT UNDERWATER ANYMORE...

I FEEL LIKE I'M DROWNING...
I'M SO SORRY...
...IN GUILT.
KRSH

I CAN'T...
SKRSH
SKRSH
SKRSH
I CAN'T IGNORE THEM.
THERE'S NO FORGIVENESS FOR A THING LIKE THIS.
WE...
WE DID THIS.
SKRSH
SHF

HE TOOK HER INTO HIS REALM, THEN.

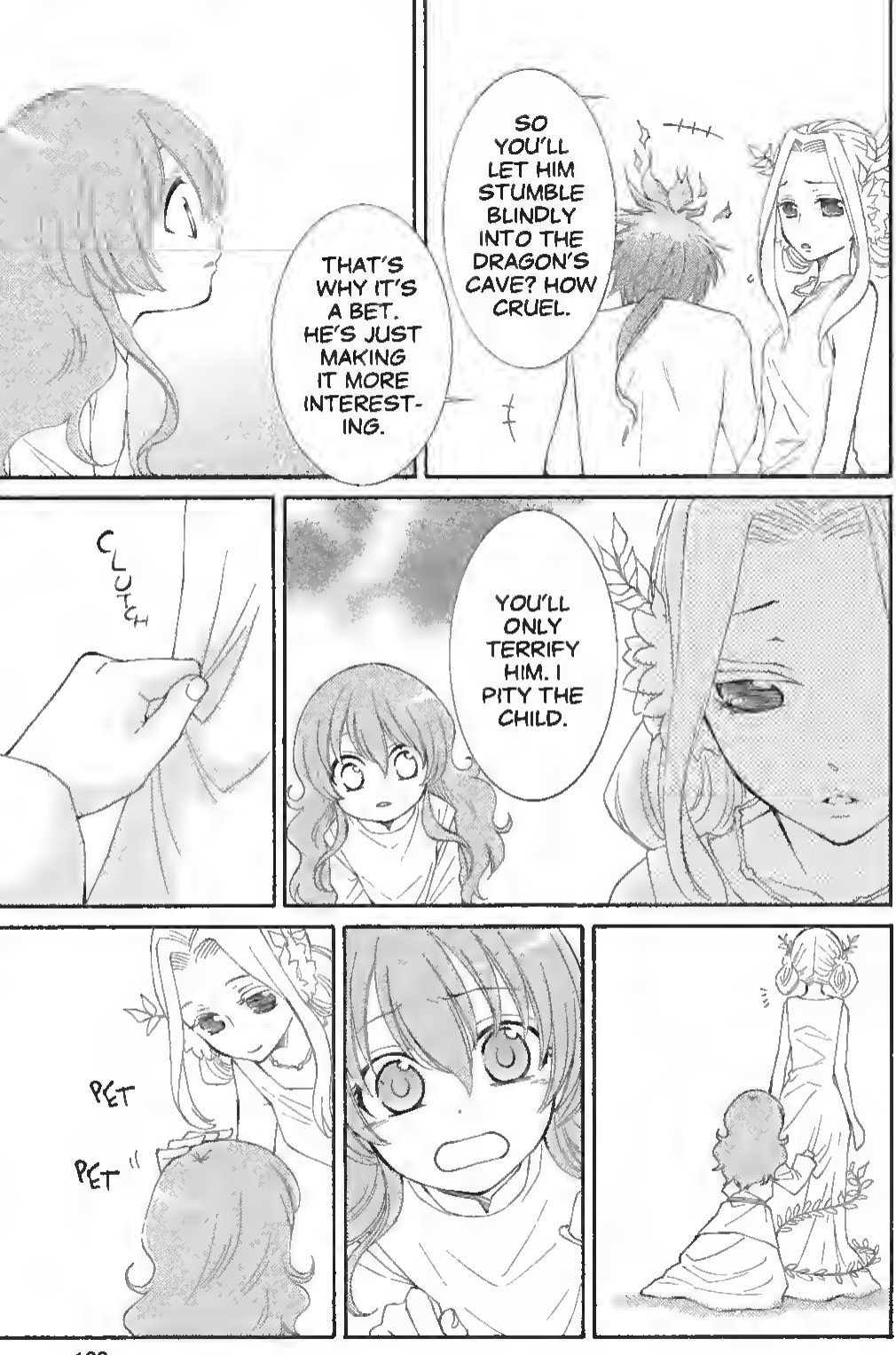
THE GOD MUST HAVE THOUGHT SHE WAS SO BEAUTIFUL HE COULDN'T LET HER GO.

SUBARU...
OOH! THIS HUMAN ISN'T AFRAID TO CROSS INTO THE REALM OF THE GODS.
HE MUST BE TRYING TO RESCUE THIS GIRL...
WHAT A BRAVE YOUNG MAN.

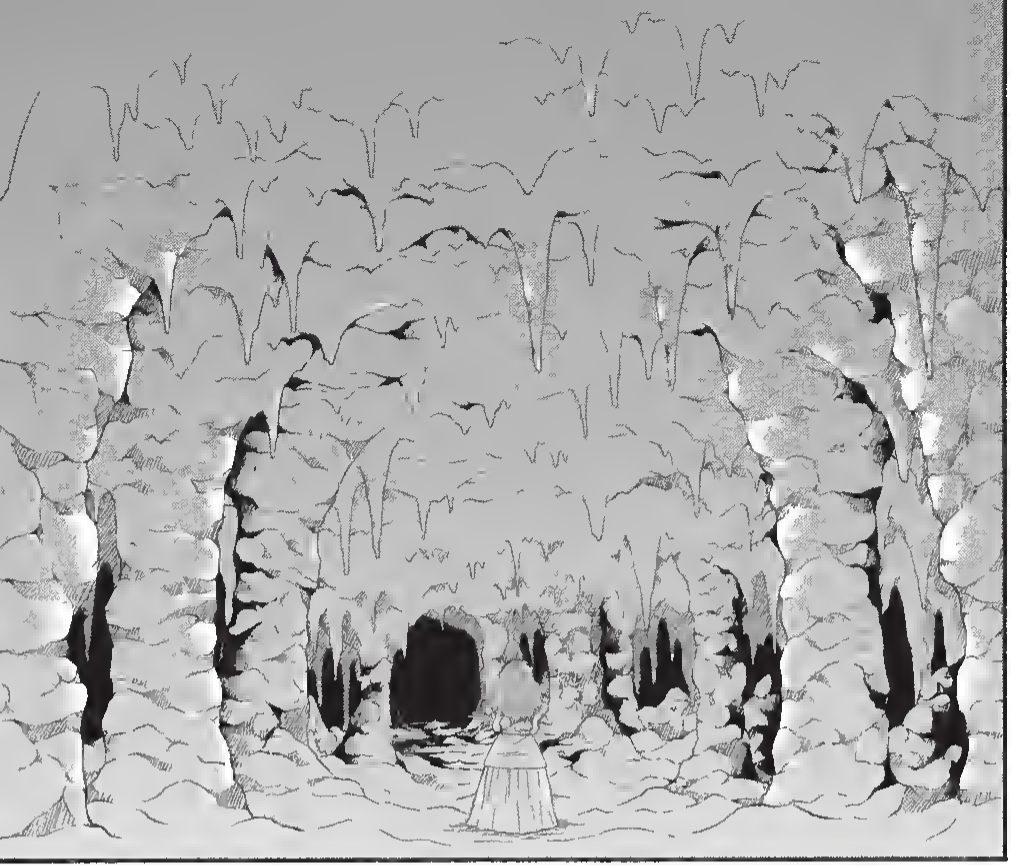
HA HA! LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOT A RIVAL FOR THIS LITTLE ONE'S AFFECTIONS, EH?
WHAT DO YOU THINK? SHALL WE BET ON WHETHER OR NOT THIS YOUNGSTER CAN RESCUE THE GIRL?
YES!
OOH, THAT SOUNDS FUN.
LET'S!
YES!
IN THAT CASE, WE'D BETTER GIVE HIM A FIGHTING CHANCE.

FWOOSH
FWSHH

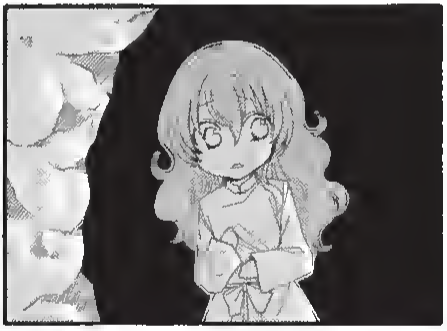
WELL ...
IT'S NOT FAIR TO LOCK HER UP IN A PLACE ONLY YOU CAN GET TO.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? I DIDN'T AUTHORIZE THAT.
HMPH.
NOT THAT IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE. HE WON'T BE ABLE TO SET HER FREE.
VERY WELL. I'LL LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD AGAIN.


SO YOU'LL LET HIM STUMBLE BLINDLY INTO THE DRAGON'S CAVE? HOW CRUEL.
THAT'S WHY IT'S A BET. HE'S JUST MAKING IT MORE INTEREST-ING.
YOU'LL ONLY TERRIFY HIM. I PITY THE CHILD.
CLUTCH
PET
PET

TRY GOING STRAIGHT THAT WAY.
OH? YOU SEEK THE EXIT?
GLANCE
GLANCE
FWUMP
TMP

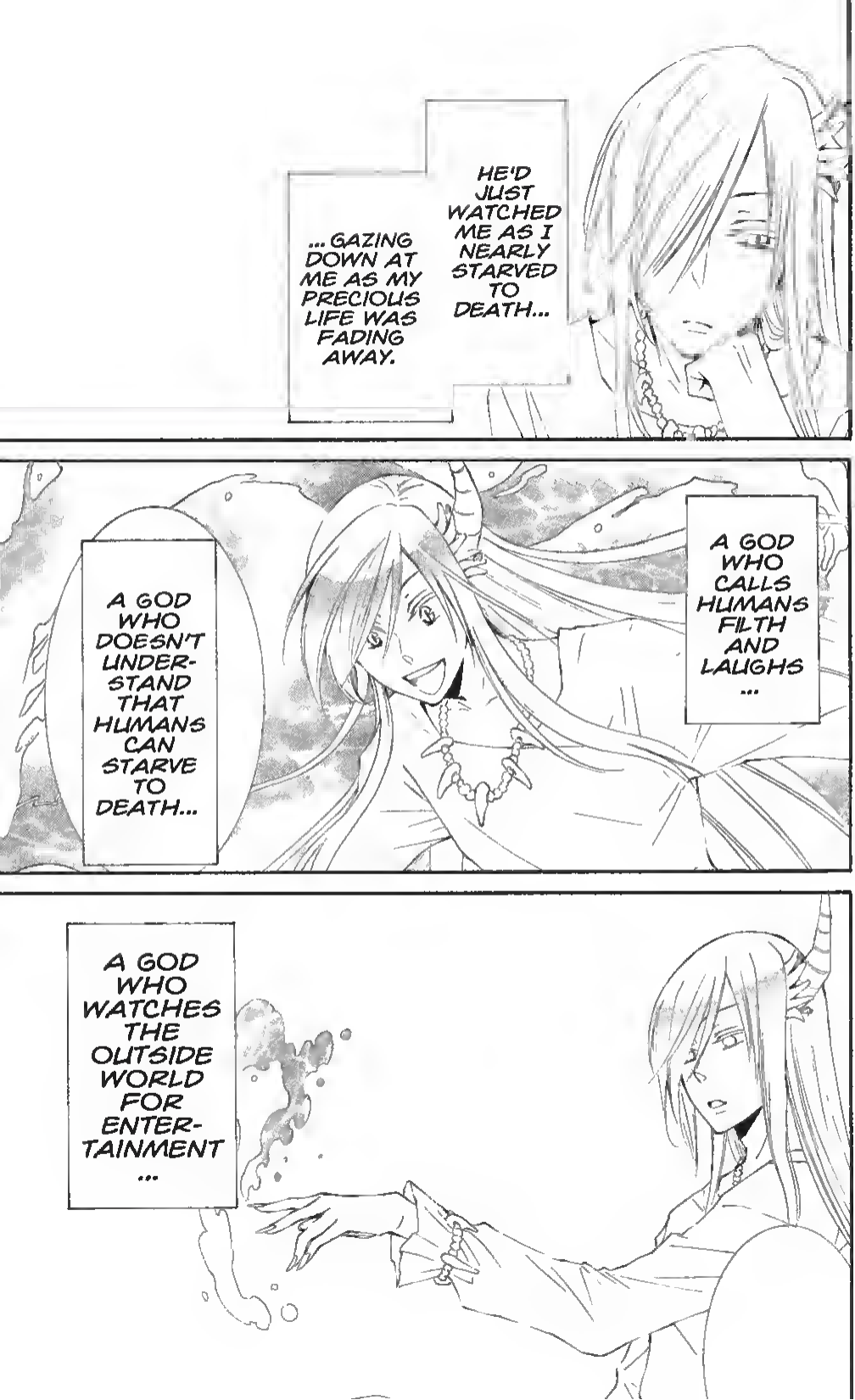


FWSH
FLINCH

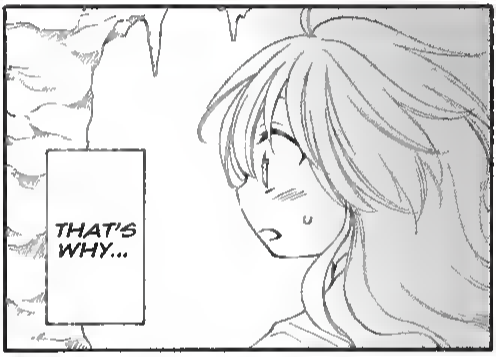


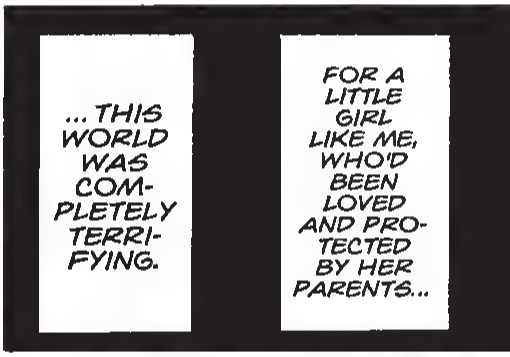
FWIP

I WAS SO AFRAID ...
I WAS COM-PLETELY TERRI-FIED OF HIM.
THAT GOD...


HE'D JUST WATCHED ME AS I NEARLY STARVED TO DEATH...
... GAZING DOWN AT ME AS MY PRECIOUS LIFE WAS FADING AWAY.
A GOD WHO CALLS HUMANS FILTH AND LAUGHS ...
A GOD WHO DOESN'T UNDER-STAND THAT HUMANS CAN STARVE TO DEATH...
A GOD WHO WATCHES THE OUTSIDE WORLD FOR ENTER-TAINMENT ...

I'D COME CLOSE TO THE BRINK OF DEATH...
...BECAUSE HE WAS BORED.


THAT'S WHY...

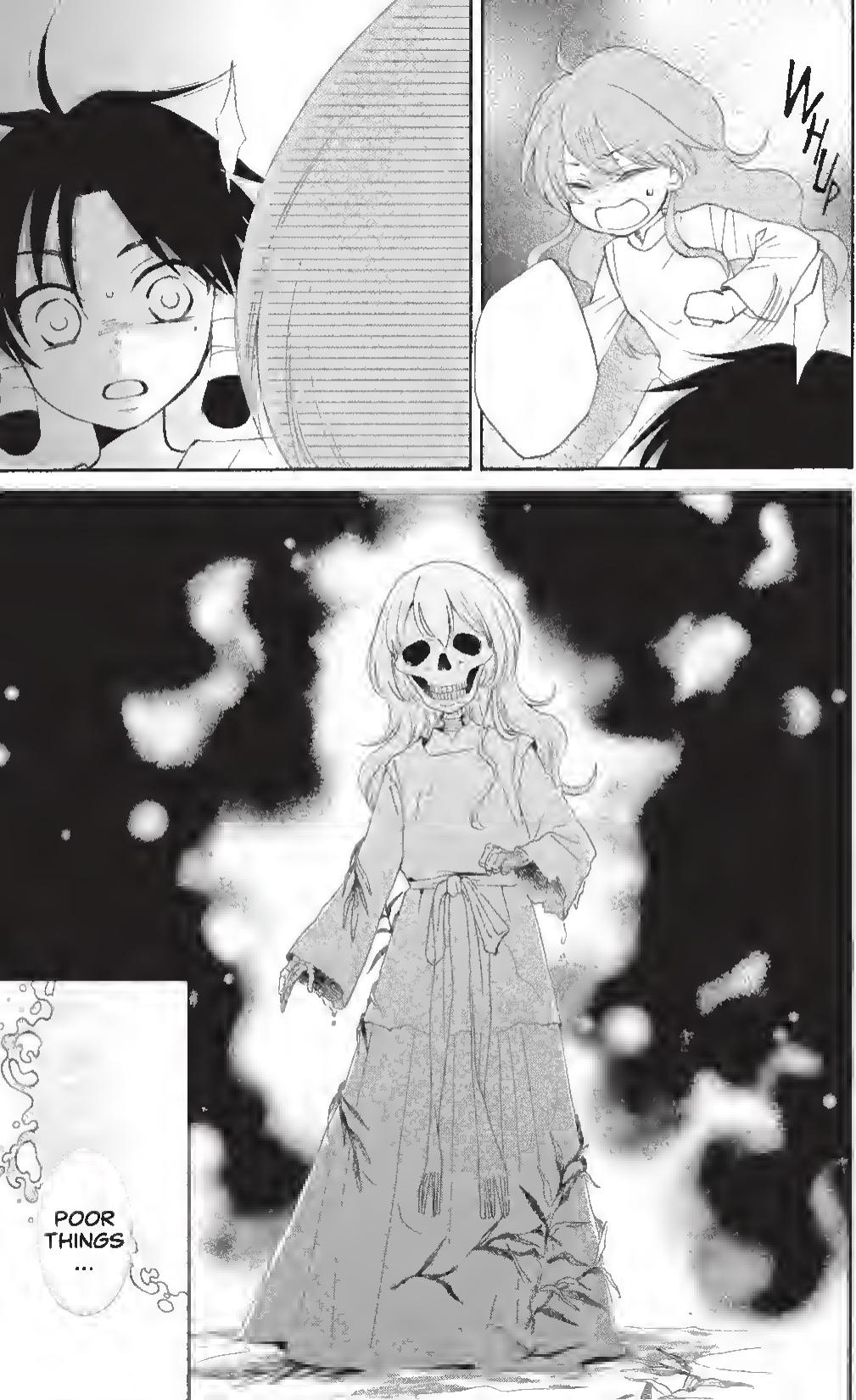

FOR A LITTLE GIRL LIKE ME, WHO'D BEEN LOVED AND PROTECTED BY HER PARENTS...
...THIS WORLD WAS COMPLETELY TERRIFYING.

ASAHI!

ASAHI...
... SUBARU'S HAND REACHING OUT TOWARD ME WAS THE MOST REASSURING SIGHT I COULD HAVE EVER IMAGINED.
ASAHI...?

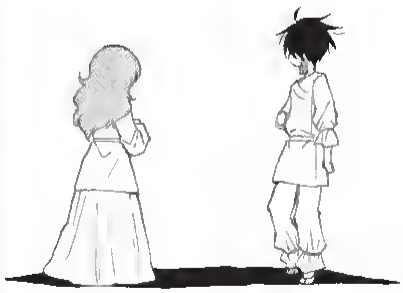
TUG
TUG
FWIP
JOY
IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW.
WE'LL LEAVE HERE TOGETHER.

IT'S DARK, SO BE CAREFUL.

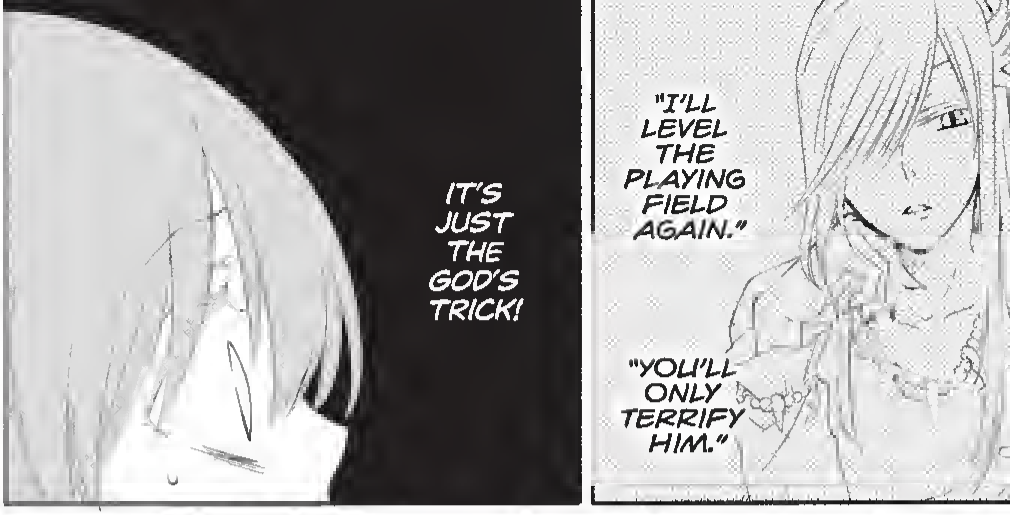

WHUP
POOR THINGS ...

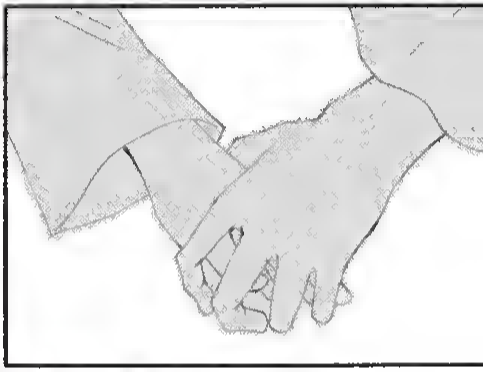
NOW THEY'RE EACH SEEING THE OTHER AS MONSTERS.
THEY MUST BE SO SCARED.
WHAT WILL HAPPEN NOW?

DASH



GRAB
ASAHI...!
ASAHI...
GASP


IT'S JUST THE GOD'S TRICK!
"I'LL LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD AGAIN."
"YOU'LL ONLY TERRIFY HIM."



I WONDER HOW SUBARU'S...
...SEEING ME?

YOU'RE REALLY SUBARU, AREN'T YOU?

SUBARU
...
I CAN'T TALK ...
PLEASE.
PLEASE ...
DON'T LEAVE ME BEHIND!
DON'T LET GO OF MY HAND...

SQUEEZE

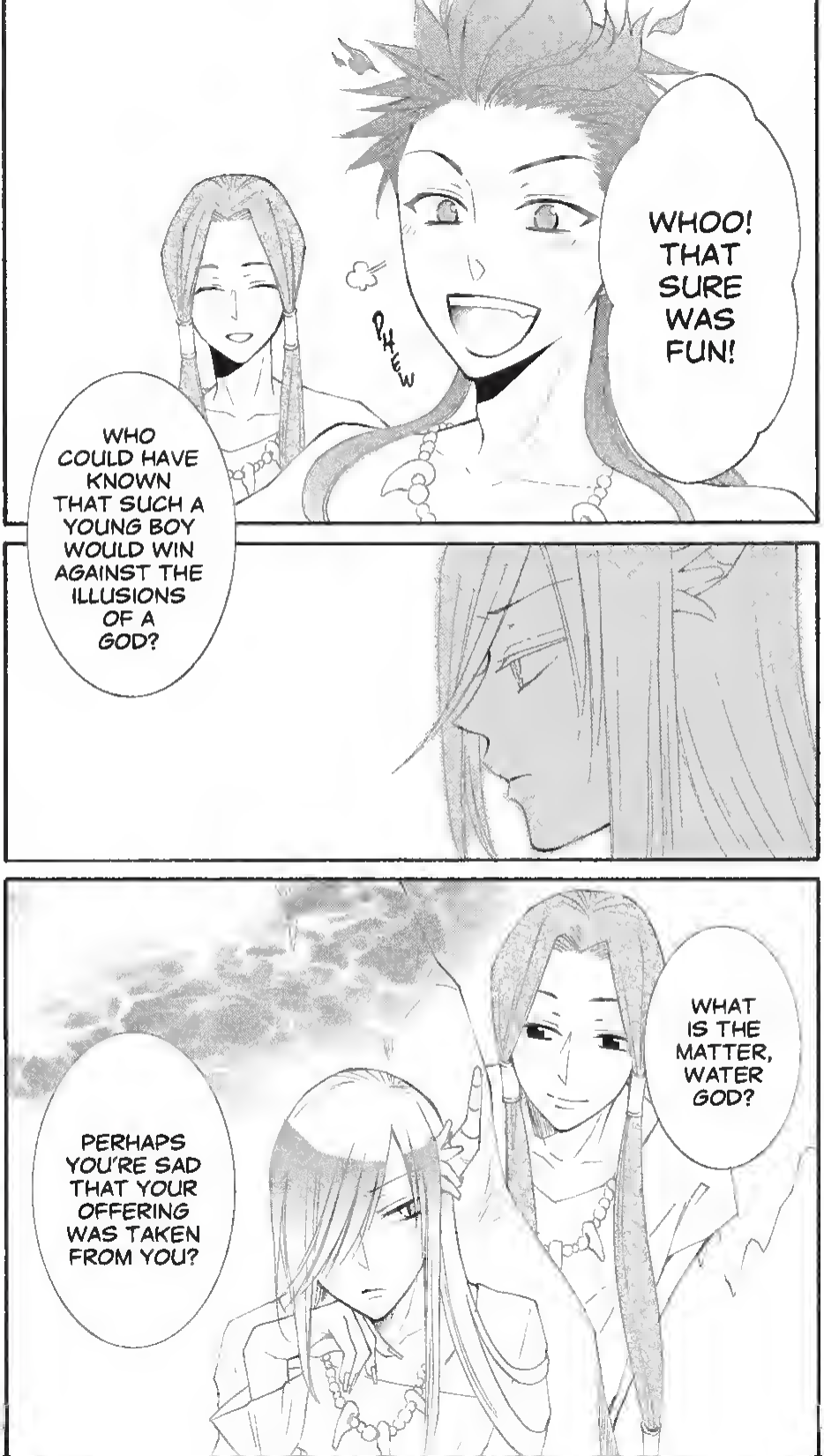
WHAT A SURPRISE! HE ISN'T LETTING GO OF HER!

ASAHI...

W...
Waahh!

EVEN IF YOU HAD...
...BECOME A PITIFUL CORPSE LIKE THEM...
...I WOULD NEVER...
...HAVE LOOKED AWAY FROM YOU.

SO I'LL NEVER...
...LET GO OF YOUR HAND.
ASAHI...
NOW THAT I'VE GOTTEN HOLD OF YOU...
...I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU GO AGAIN.


WHOO! THAT SURE WAS FUN!
PHEW
WHO COULD HAVE KNOWN THAT SUCH A YOUNG BOY WOULD WIN AGAINST THE ILLUSIONS OF A GOD?
WHAT IS THE MATTER, WATER GOD?
PERHAPS YOU'RE SAD THAT YOUR OFFERING WAS TAKEN FROM YOU?

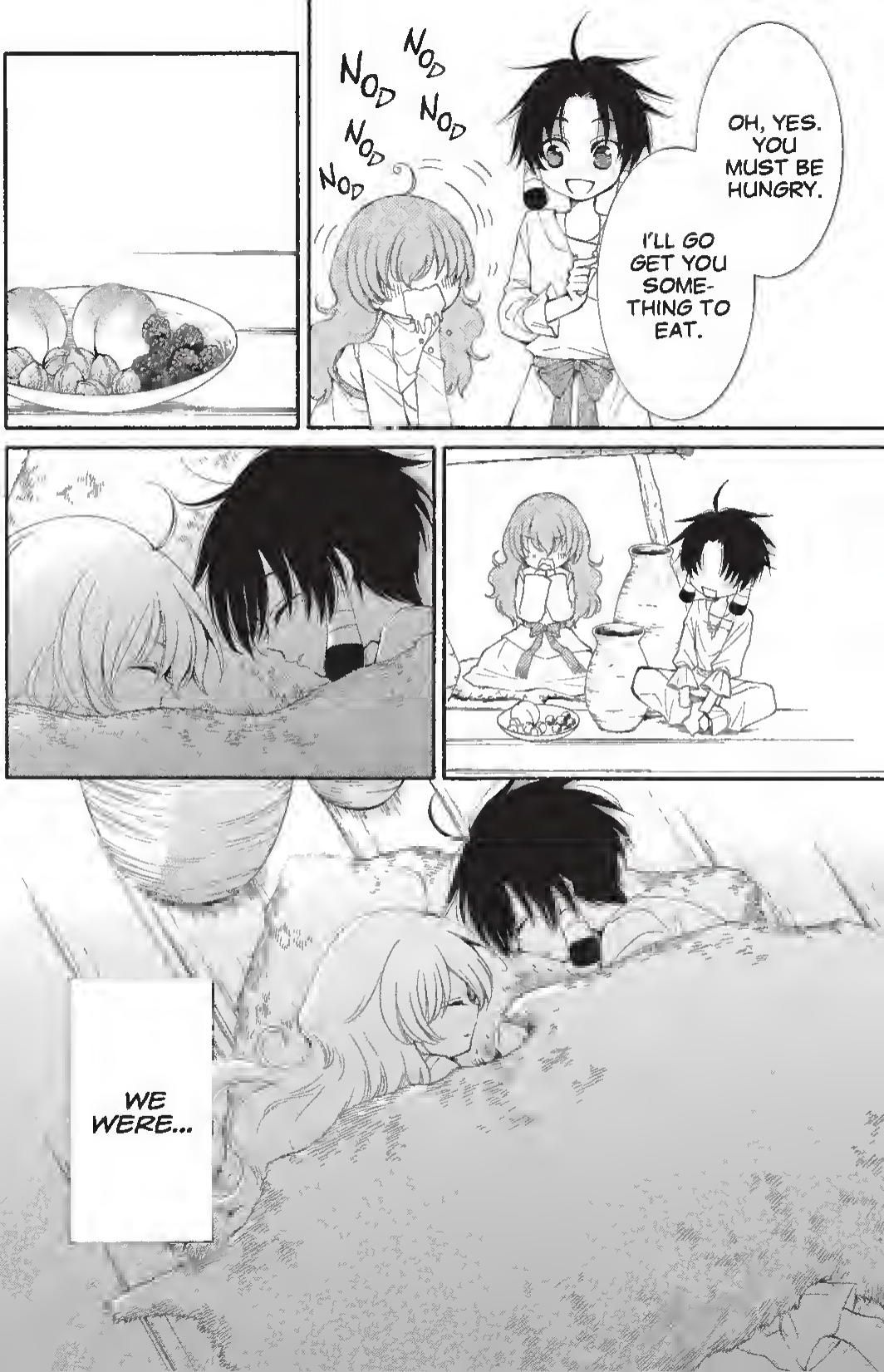
WELL...
NOW WE SHALL SEE WHAT HAPPENS TO HER...
...WHEN SHE RETURNS TO THE VERY VILLAGE THAT SACRIFICED HER.

CHAPTER
4

ASAHI
...
THIS WAY!
SHF SHF SHF
WHEW!

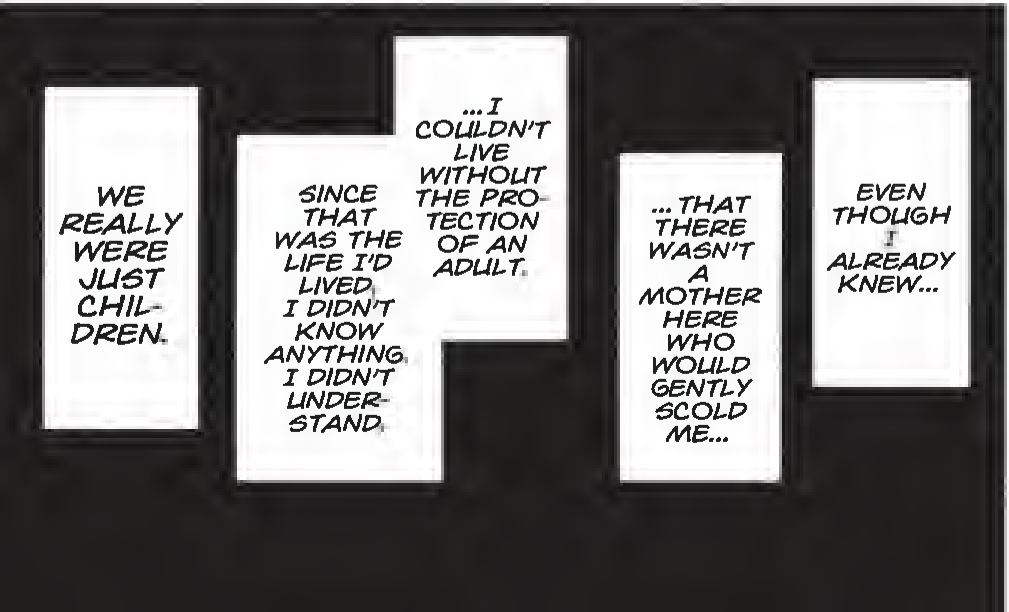
NGH... PHEW!
TMP
HUP.
AND...
PLOP
THERE WE GO.

I'M HERE, SO DON'T WORRY.


NOD
NOD
NOD
NOD
NOD
OH, YES. YOU MUST BE HUNGRY.
I'LL GO GET YOU SOME-THING TO EAT.
WE WERE...

... WAS A SECRET BASE.
THIS ...
... SUCH CHIL-DREN.

MY MOM FOUND IT RIGHT AWAY, AND I GOT IN A LOT OF TROUBLE.
ONCE, I FOUND A KITTEN AND THOUGHT I COULD KEEP IT IN THE CLOSET.
... I KNEW I'D BE IN TROUBLE IF IT WAS FOUND.
IF I HAD SOME-THING I WASN'T SUP-POSED TO HAVE...

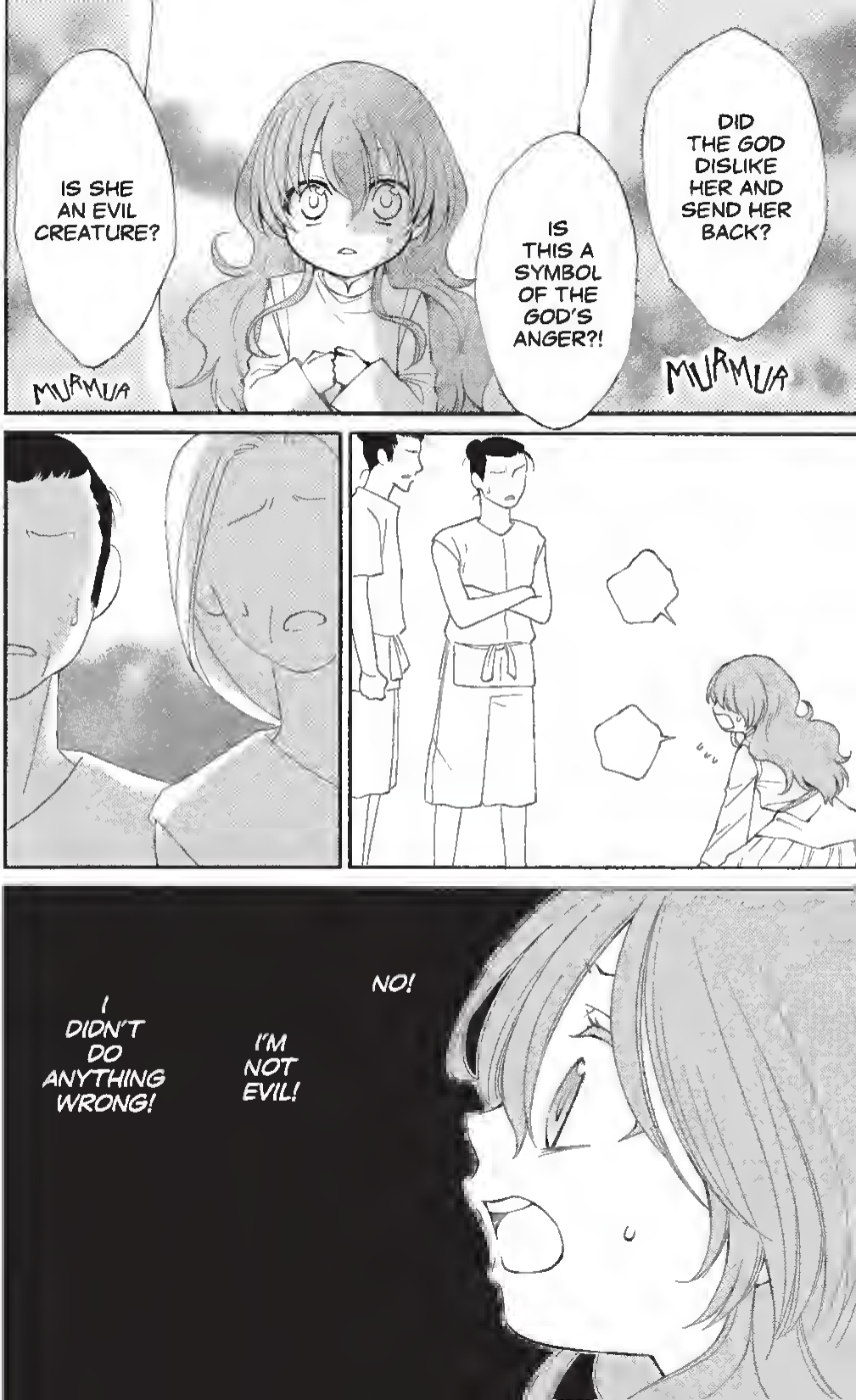

WE REALLY WERE JUST CHIL-DREN.
SINCE THAT WAS THE LIFE I'D LIVED, I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING. I DIDN'T UNDER-STAND.
... I COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT THE PRO-TECTION OF AN ADULT.
... THAT THERE WASN'T A MOTHER HERE WHO WOULD GENTLY SCOLD ME...
EVEN THOUGH I ALREADY KNEW...

I'LL BE RIGHT BACK, SO JUST WAIT HERE. DON'T LEAVE, OKAY?
I WAS A CHILD ...
...AND SO WAS SUBARU.
TMP TMP TMP
I'M BUSY RIGHT NOW. SEE YOU LATER!
BROTHER, HOW ABOUT IF TODAY WE—
AH!
YOU WON'T EVEN PLAY WITH ME...
YOU'VE BEEN NO FUN LATELY, BROTHER! NOT IN THE LEAST!
MMMF

WHAT'S THAT...?
FINE! I'LL JUST WAIT HERE UNTIL HE COMES BACK!
...

AH...
AHHHH !!!
THE GIRL WE OFFERED TO THE WATER DRAGON GOD IS BACK!!
M-MOTHER!! THAT GIRL—!

MURMUR
MURMUR
MURMUR
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
THAT'S DEFINITELY THE GIRL WE OFFERED TO THE WATER DRAGON GOD...
ASAHI ...!


IS SHE AN EVIL CREATURE?
MURMUR
IS THIS A SYMBOL OF THE GOD'S ANGER?!
DID THE GOD DISLIKE HER AND SEND HER BACK?
MURMUR
NO!
I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG!
I'M NOT EVIL!

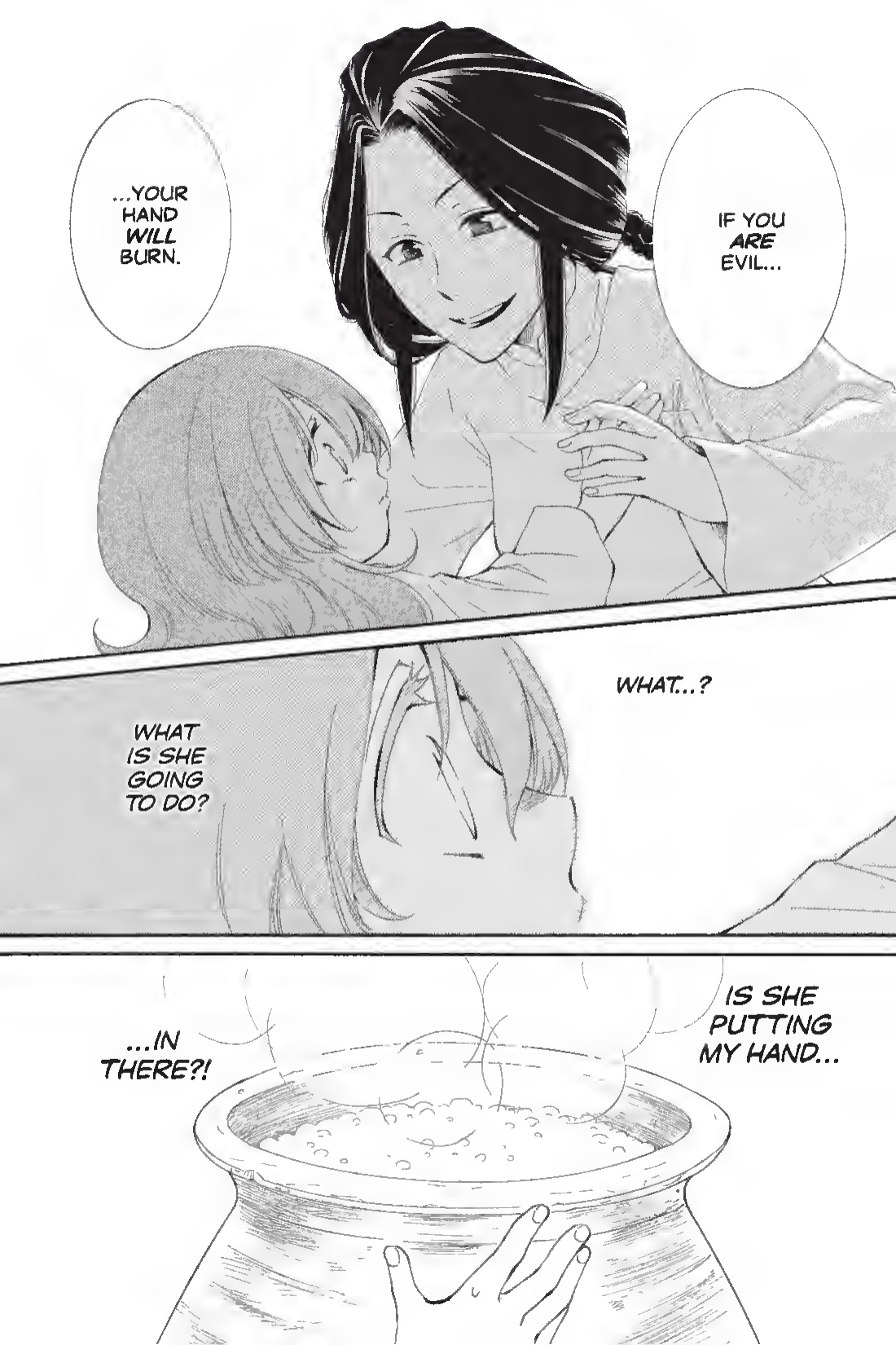
SHAKE
SHAKE
THIS MUST BE DUE TO THE FACT THAT SHE'S BEEN TOUCHED BY THE WATER DRAGON GOD'S RAGE.
OH MY GOOD-NESS. CAN SHE NO LONGER SPEAK?
ASAHI'S NOT BAD!
PLEASE ...
PLEASE DON'T DO ANYTHING AWFUL TO HER!
MOTHER ...!
SUBARU...!
ASAHI!

MURMUR
OH... THAT'S IT!
THAT WAY WE'LL KNOW FOR SURE!
RIT... UAL?
LET US PERFORM A RITUAL THAT WILL ALLOW US TO DEFINITIVELY ASK THE GOD HIS WILL.
PREPARE FOR THE RITUAL!
BLUB
BLUB
FOOM

GRAB
MOTHER! PLEASE, STOP THIS!
WSI
LET HER GO!
SLAP

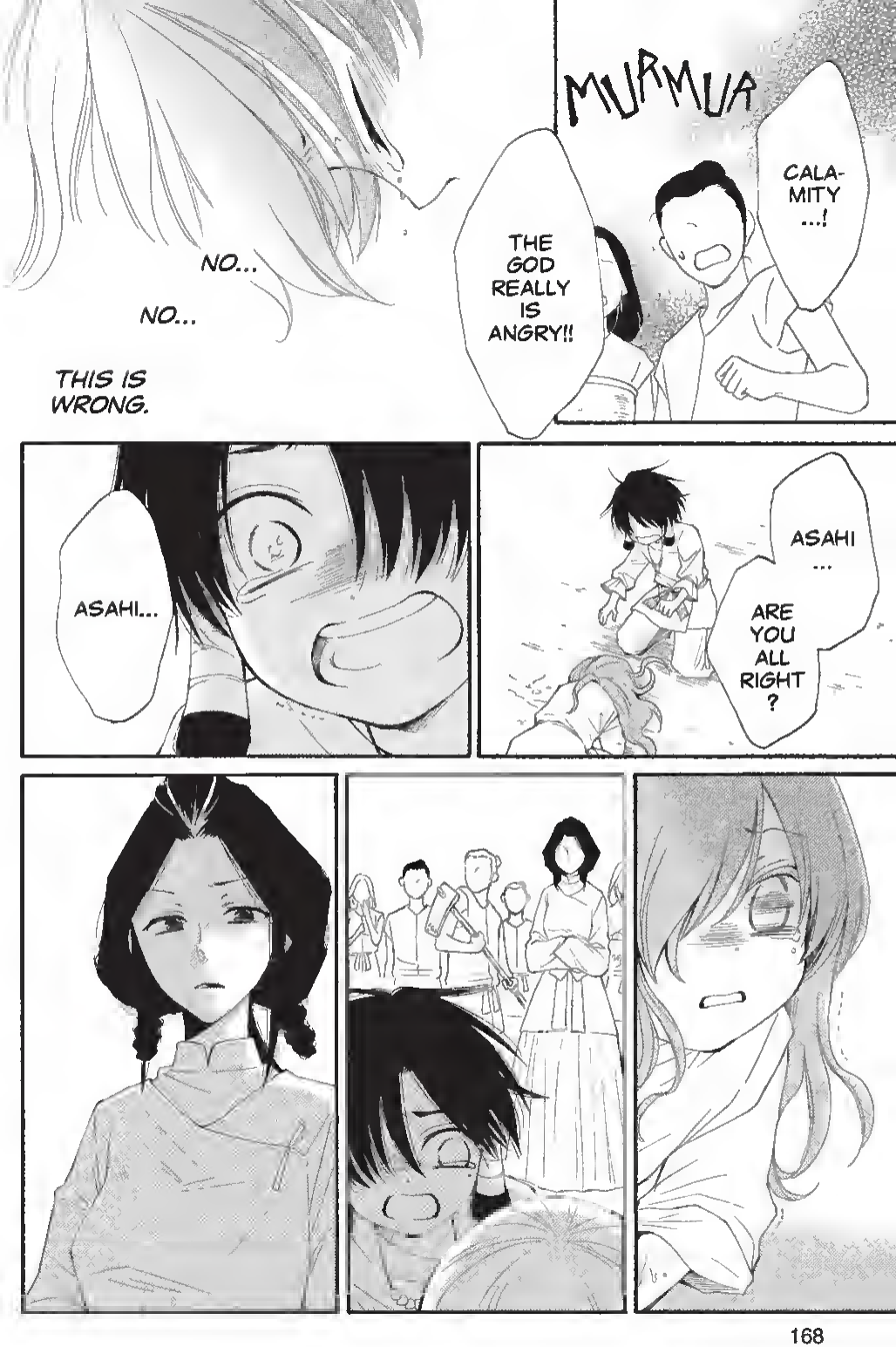
SHAKE
SHAKE
ARE YOU EVIL?
YOUNG LADY...
FLINCH
NOD
NOD
I SEE...
AND YOU'RE TELLING THE TRUTH?
SMILE
WELL THEN...

IF YOU ARE NOT AN EVIL CREATURE WHO WILL BRING CALAMITY UNTO OUR VILLAGE...
...THEN YOUR HAND WILL NOT BURN.
HOWEVER...


...YOUR HAND *WILL* BURN.
IF YOU *ARE* EVIL...
WHAT...?
WHAT IS SHE GOING TO DO?
...IN THERE?!
IS SHE PUTTING MY HAND...

DASH

ASAHI !!
LOOK!
SHE'S BEEN BURNED !!
ASAHI ...!


NO...
NO...
THIS IS WRONG.
MURMUR
CALA-MITY ...!
THE GOD REALLY IS ANGRY!!
ASAHI...
ASAHI ...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT ?

OH...
WE HAVE TO KILL H—
WHAT SHOULD WE DO WITH THE GIRL?
WSH
MOVE AWAY FROM THERE

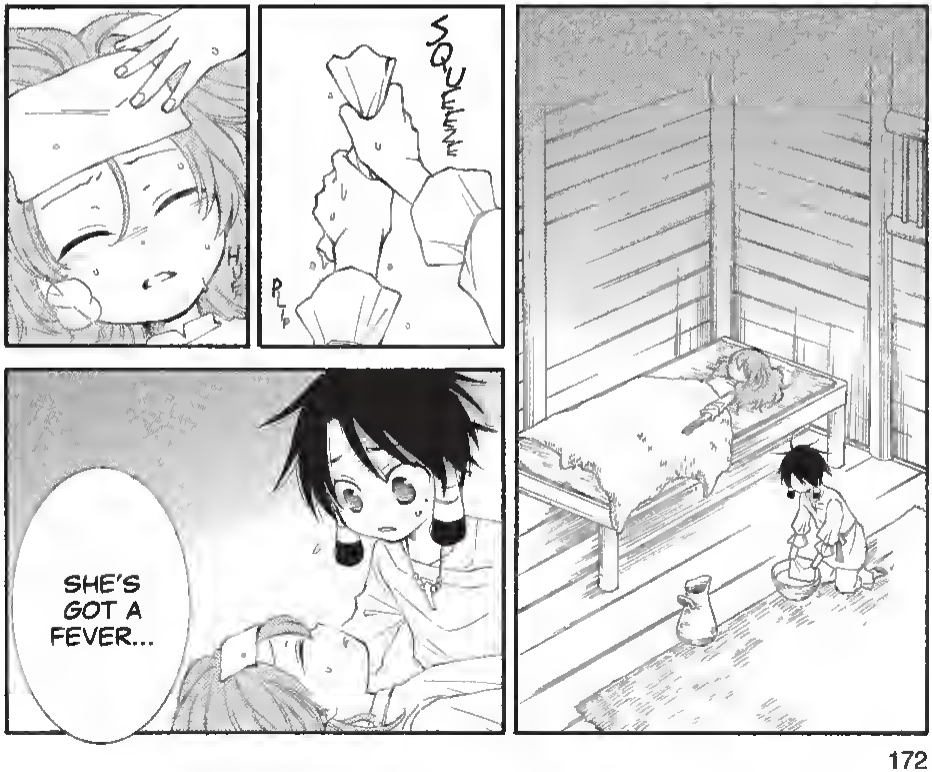
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
WHAT DO I DO?!
MOVE ASIDE, SUBARU!
W...
GIVE THAT GIRL TO US!
WHY NOTJUST LEAVE HER AS IS?

WHETHER SHE LIVES OR DIES IS THE WILL OF THE GOD, ISN'T IT?
THERE'S NO NEED TO DIRECTLY RENDER JUDGMENT. SHE'S VERY YOUNG, AND THIS IS A VERY BAD BURN.
SHE'LL DEFINITELY SUFFER.
LET'S WAIT FOR WHAT THE GOD WILLS.
YES... THAT'S TRUE.
SUBARU ...!

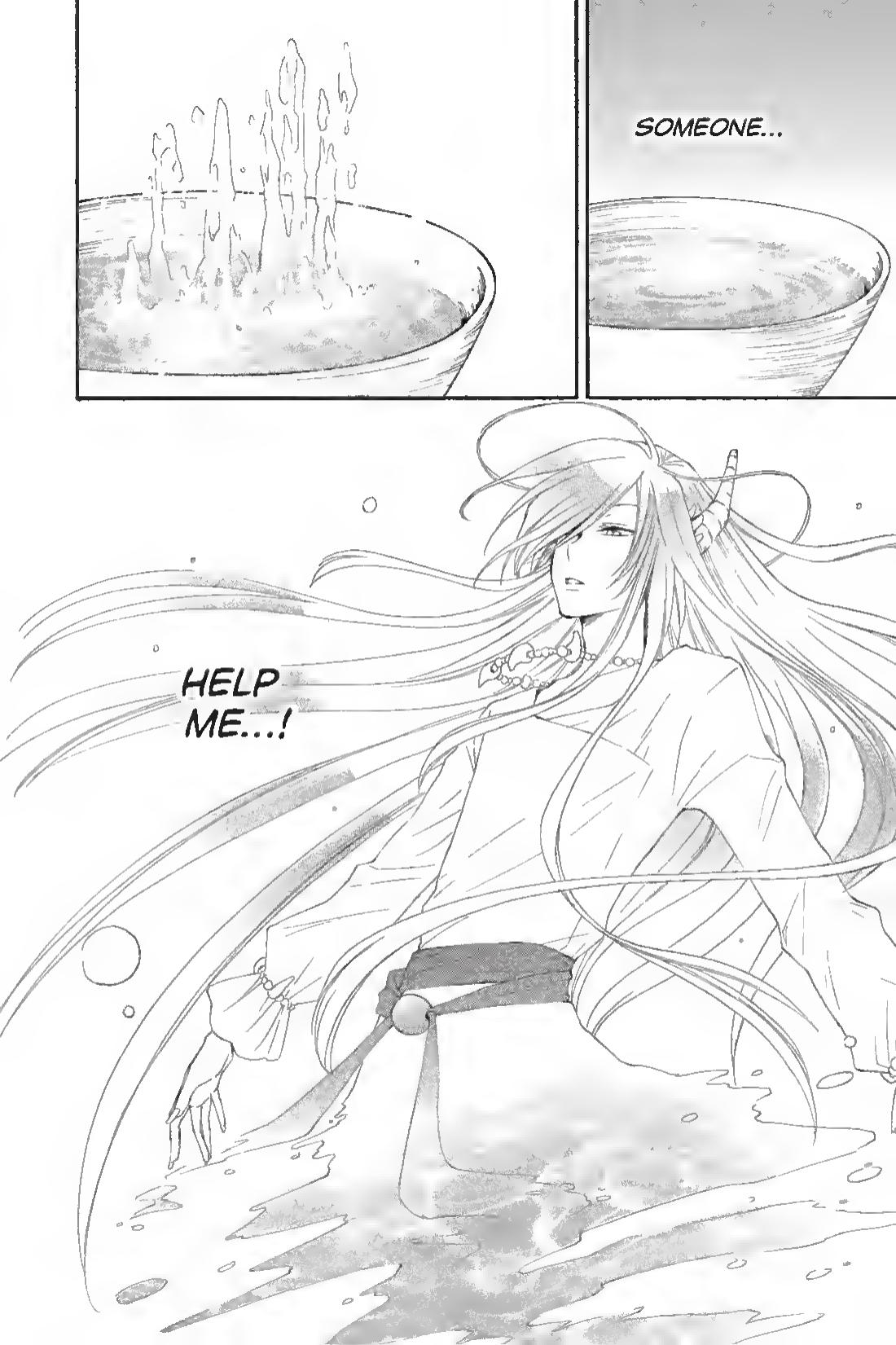
I WILL NOT...

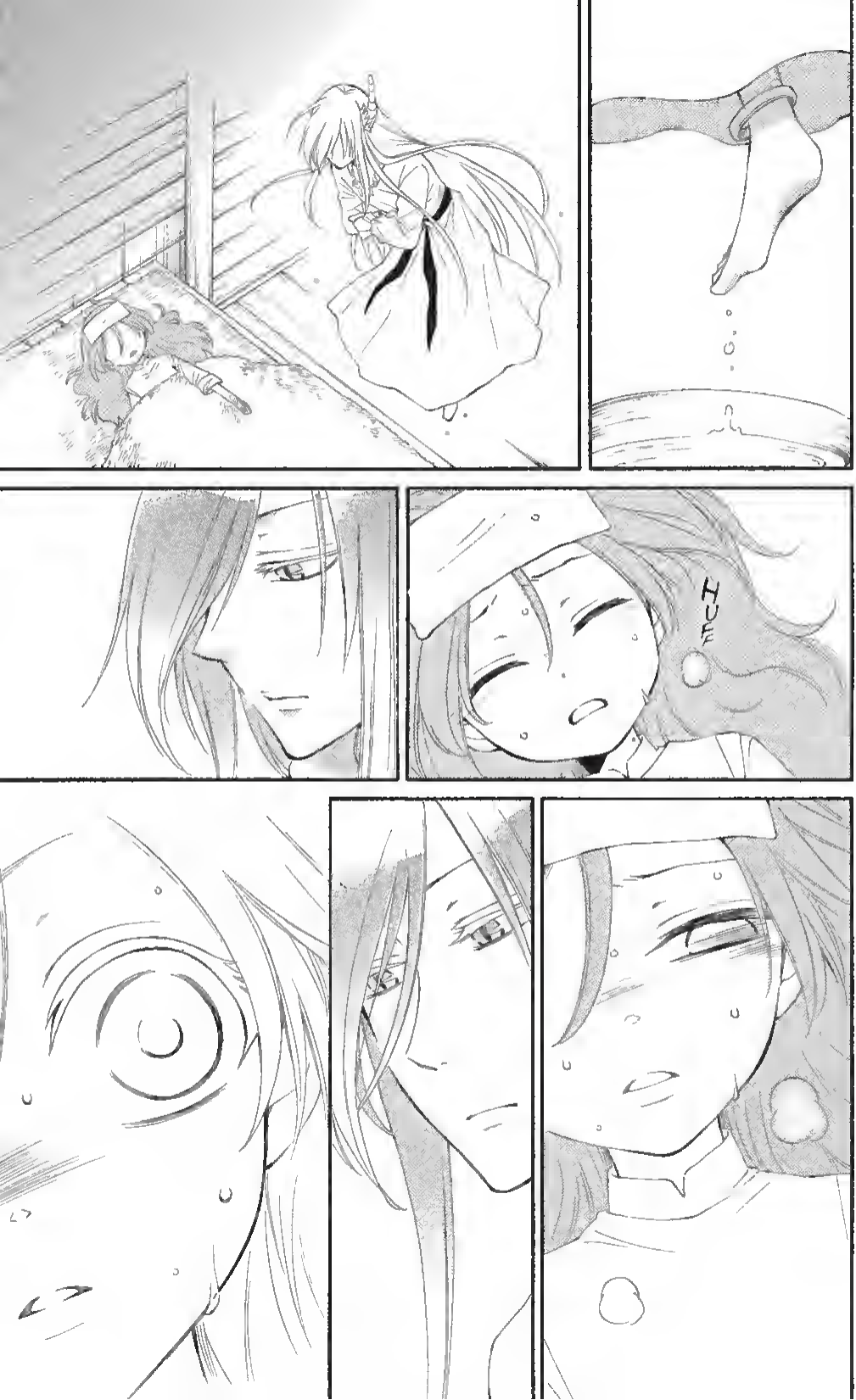
...GIVE ASAHI UP, MOTHER.

NOT TO YOU...
...AND NOT TO THAT GOD.


HUH
SQUEEZE
PLP
SHE'S GOT A FEVER...

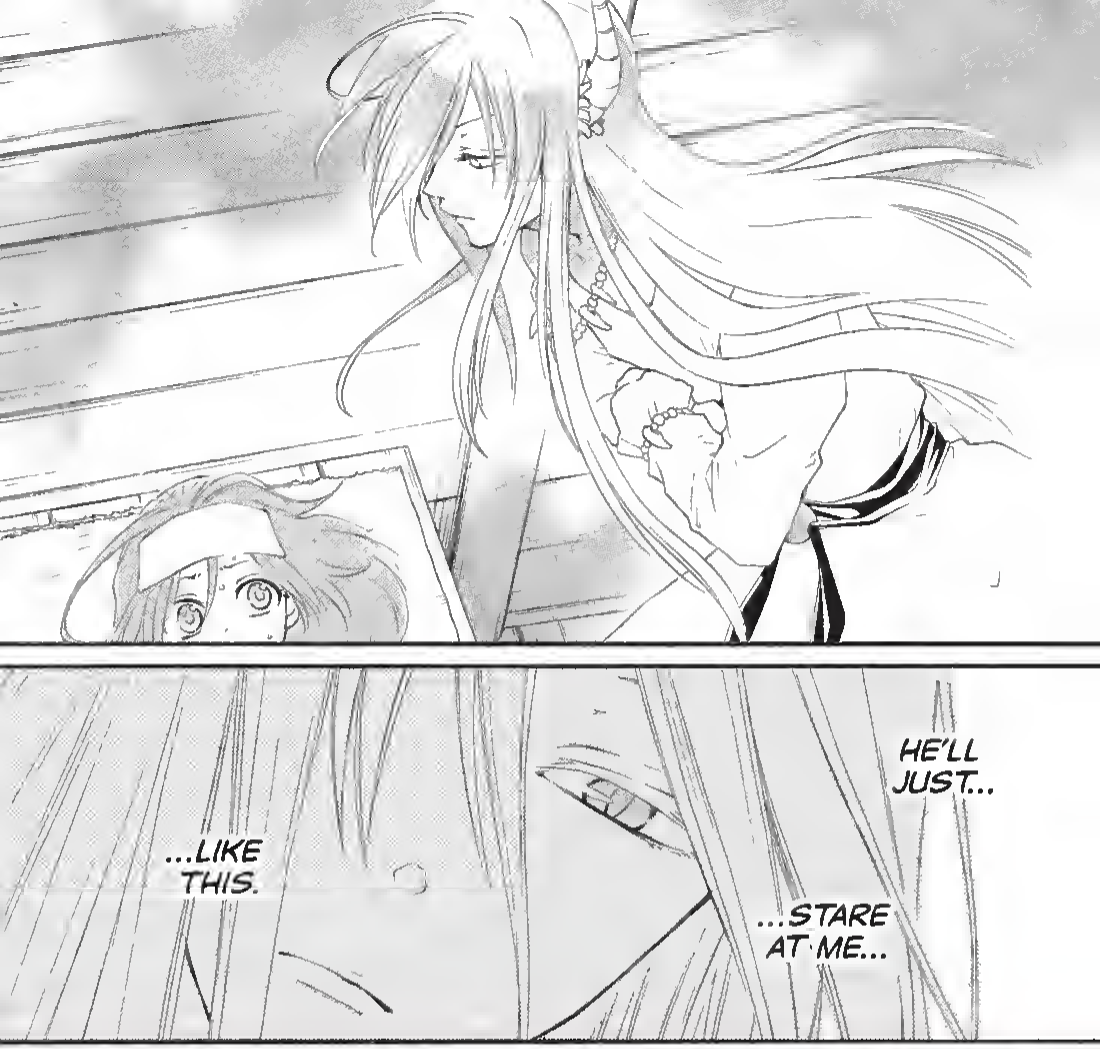
HUFF
HUFF
CLATTER
I'M GOING TO GET COOL WATER.
WAIT FOR ME, ASAHI.
IT'S HOT...
IT HURTS...
NOT JUST MY HAND...
IT HURTS...
...EVERYWHERE...
IT HURTS SO MUCH...


SOMEONE...
HELP ME...!


HUH

NO.

HE WOULD NEVER HELP ME.

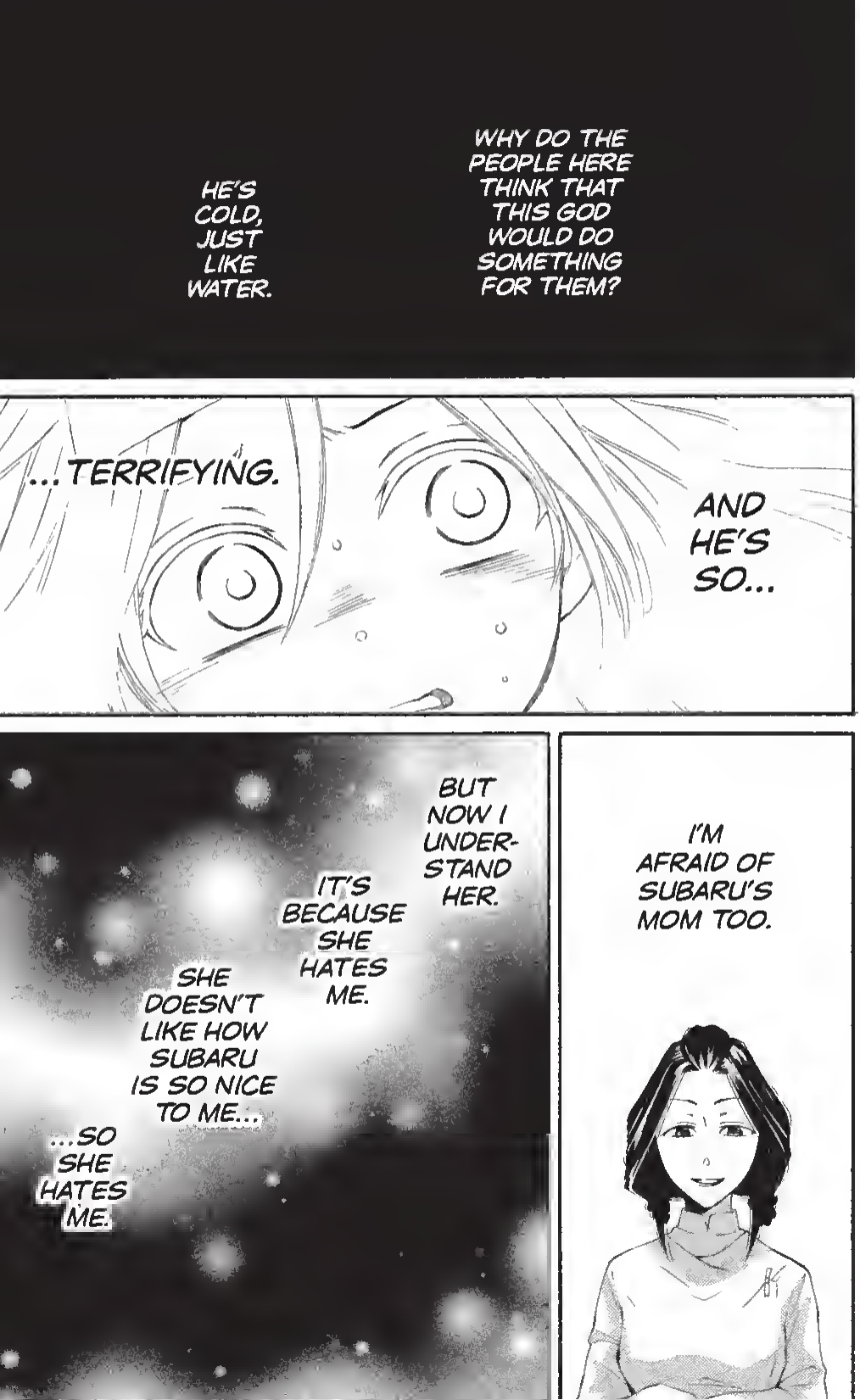


IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER YOU'RE BAD OR GOOD.

IT DOESN'T MATTER IF YOU BELIEVE IN HIM OR NOT.

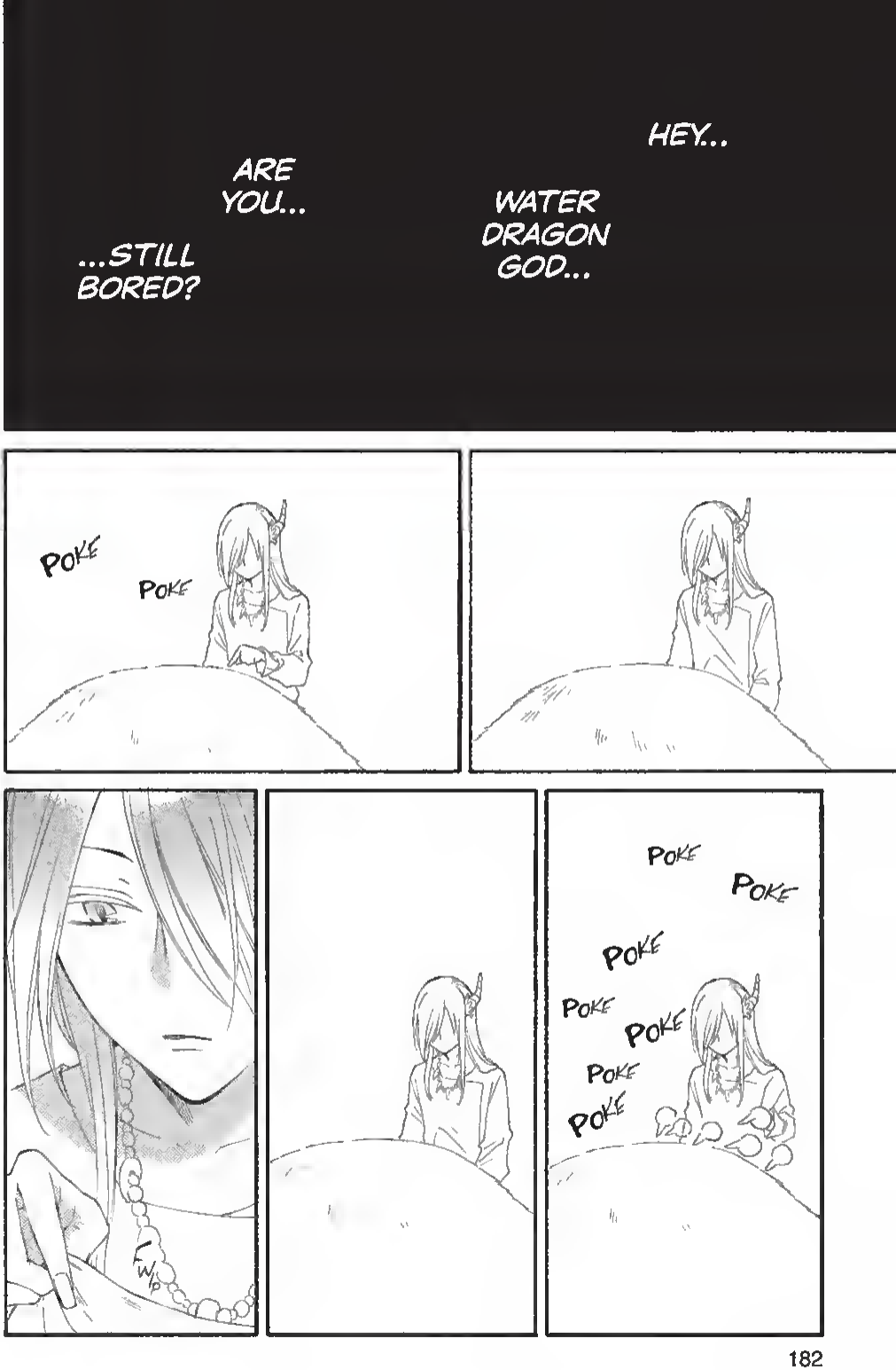
HE'LL ALWAYS JUST...

...WATCH.

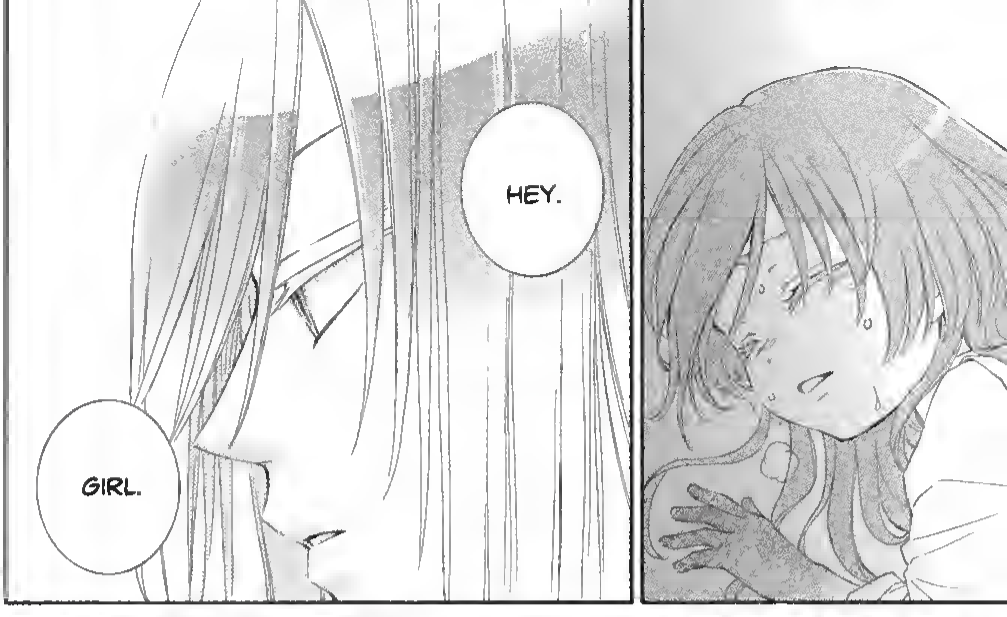

WHY DO THE PEOPLE HERE THINK THAT THIS GOD WOULD DO SOMETHING FOR THEM?
HE'S COLD, JUST LIKE WATER.
AND HE'S SO...
...TERRIFYING.
I'M AFRAID OF SUBARU'S MOM TOO.
BUT NOW I UNDER-STAND HER.
IT'S BECAUSE SHE HATES ME.
SHE DOESN'T LIKE HOW SUBARU IS SO NICE TO ME...
...SO SHE HATES ME.

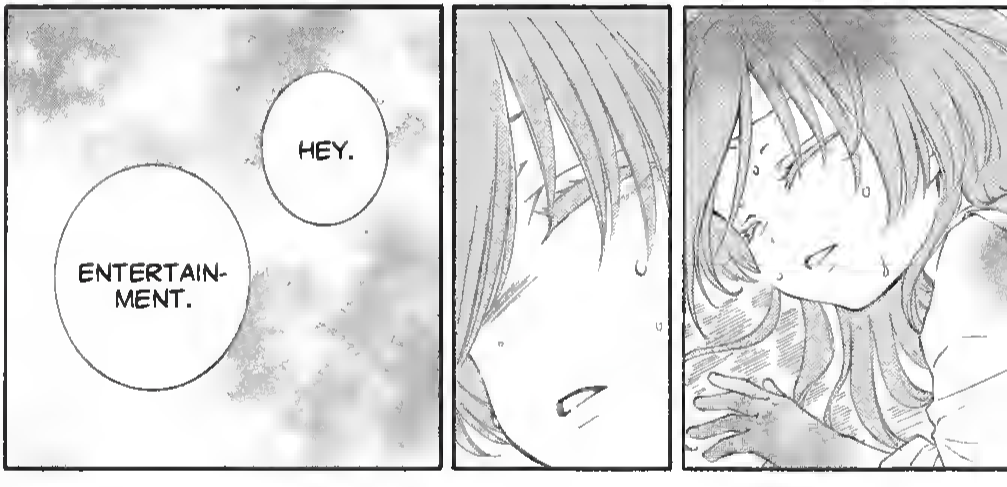
...I'D RATHER BE AFRAID OF A PERSON WITH FEELINGS I UNDERSTAND.
STOP LOOKING AT ME.
BUT IF I HAVE TO BE AFRAID...
DON'T LOOK AT ME!!
PLAP
WHEN IT COMES TO GODS, THIS ONE...

... IS LIKE A SECRET BASE BUILT BY CHILDREN.
TOO SIMPLE.
WHEENE
WHEENE
TOO FOOL-ISH.
DID YOU JUST... SLAP A GOD...?
FWUMPH
WHEN THIS GOD WAS CREATED ...
... IT MUST HAVE BEEN A FRIVOLOUS AFTER-THOUGHT, TAKING A MERE MOMENT.


HEY...
ARE YOU...
WATER DRAGON GOD...
...STILL BORED?
POKE
POKE
POKE
POKE
POKE
POKE
POKE
POKE
FWIP

THAT A GOD'S JUDGMENT WOULD FALL UPON THEM?
WHAT DID THEY THINK WOULD HAPPEN UPON YOUR RETURN?
...
BUT YOU HAVE NOT LOOKED AT ME WITH YOUR PLEADING EYES, HAVE YOU...
HUMANS ARE TRULY FOOLISH CREA-TURES.
WHAT WOULD MAKE ME WANT TO DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT?





ARE YOU GOING TO DIE?

BLUB
HISSSS

WHAT A TRIVIAL LITTLE CREATURE ...
SLUMP
OOP.
SLP
TUP

SUCK
ZZZ
ROLL

THE WATER DRAGON'S BRIDE 1 – THE END –

The Water Dragon's Bride
VOL. 1
Shojo Beat Edition

Story and Art by
Rei Toma

SUIJIN NO HANAYOME Vol.1
by Rei TOMA
© 2015 Rei TOMA
All rights reserved.
Original Japanese edition published by SHOGAKUKAN.
English translation rights in the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand arranged with SHOGAKUKAN.

ORIGINAL COVER DESIGN/Hibiki CHIKADA (fireworks.vc)

English Translation & Adaptation **Abby Lehrke**
Touch-Up Art & Lettering **Monalisa de Asis**
Design **Alice Lewis**
Editor **Amy Yu**

The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this publication are entirely fictional.

No portion of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without written permission from the copyright holders.

Printed in the U.S.A.

Published by VIZ Media, LLC
P.O. Box 77010
San Francisco, CA 94107

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
First printing, April 2017

viz media
viz.com

Shojo Beat
shojobeat.com

**This is the volume 1 graphic novel of my new series!
It's a fantasy work again.
I'd be really happy if you enjoyed it!**
– REI TOMA

Rei Toma has been drawing since childhood, and she created her first complete manga for a graduation project in design school. When she drew the short story manga "Help Me, Dentist," it attracted a publisher's attention and she made her debut right away. After she found success as a manga artist, acclaim in other art fields started to follow as she did illustrations for novels and video game character designs. She is also the creator of *Dawn of the Arcana*, available in North America from VIZ Media.

RATED T FOR TEEN
PARENTAL ADVISORY
THE WATER DRAGON'S BRIDE is rated T for Teen and is recommended for ages 13 and up
This volume contains suggestive themes
ratings.viz.com